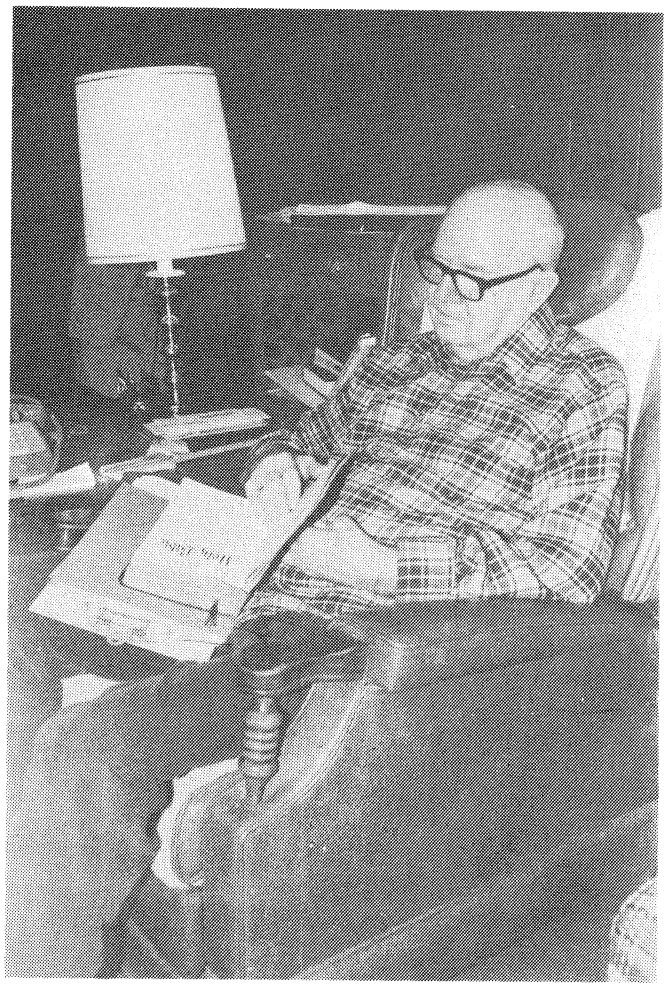
Learning Through Suffering
(My Testimony)

by GLENN E. SONES



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Glenn Elis Sones
Born November 4, 1916. Died May 1, 1991

He was the ninth child born to J.Q. & Mary Alma Sones who had twelve children. He grew up in a Christian home as his father was a Baptist minister and his mother was a wonderful Christian lady. He learned the importance of love and affection with his many brothers and sister with all sharing and caring for each other. He went to live with his oldest sister when he was about 15 years old. There he finished high school and went two years to college at Pearl River Jr. College. He went on to Mississippi State University and finished with a degree in Vocational Educa tion. He served in the Army during World War II. He taught school at many schools before going to Lumberton High School where he stayed until he had a stroke. He taught school at Lumberton High for about twenty six (26) years. All during this time he always lived a Christian life. He was saved at an early age, and was baptized at the age of 14. I know as a little boy he always gave me good advice about life. He always tried to instill these values to his students. He was in the hospital with kidney stone problems when he had a stroke that completely paralyzed his left side. This did not stop him from being a useful person. He was very active in his church and many civic clubs. This was a very difficult time in his life but he had great faith in God. God used him to bless many people (this writer included). He began to write articles on many subjects of the Bible. I have gotten most of his writings and I'm putting them in book form for the Glory of God. This would have been what he wanted; that our Savior would be exalted and those who read it could receive a blessing. He was a great blessing to me as a natural brother and a brother in Christ. It is my prayer when you read these writings, that you will receive a great blessing.

Leo Virgil Sones

P.S. A special thanks to Mrs. Glenn Sones and her daughter, Judy. Without their help I could not have put this together.

Words from a former Pastor . . .

"Where he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Ephesians 4:8.

And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelist; and some pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-13.

It is always a joy to speak in behalf of the memory of my dear brother in Christ. I was his pastor for many years at Little Black Creek Baptist Church and came to know him as a dedicated Christian. Bro. Glenn Sones was a man who was swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. James 1:19. These qualities brought him great respect among his fellow church members.

First he had received the gift of eternal salvation, and after that he was faithful to use his gift of understanding and teaching. He was always diligent to impart his knowledge of the word to the students in his classroom as a foundation for living in later years. He was a great teacher in his Sunday School class. After he became ill and unable to attend worship services, the lessons he wrote and sent to his many friends became a means of teaching that was his way of life in the Lord.

He was a good husband, a good father and a good citizen. He was faithful to his Lord, faithful to his church, and faithful to his brethren - a great soldier in the army of God.

One of his favorite scriptures was Galatians 6:9." And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

Elder Norman H Entrekin

Words from a former Pastor . . .

It is a very distinct privilege that I pay honor to Glen Sones, a fellow servant in the kingdom of God.

I served as Glenn's pastor for over 10 years and was able to see how God moved him from a public speaking ministry to a writing ministry and then in the last years of his life to a prayer ministry. This man lived his life with a defective outer body, but his inner man became more alive with each passing year. He was a source of encouragement to so many and his Spirit life was fruitful up to the day he met Jesus face to face.

When I left the pastorate, Glenn became my personal intercessor. He prayed for me every day and many spiritual victories were won because of this man who never left his home.

I am very grateful for this man being a part of my ministry. His life was a river of truth that refreshed so many. It is my prayer that as you read his writings, you will be touched in your heart by what this man, Glenn Sones, believed and lived each day of his life.

Re. James W. Hickman

Phil. 4:19

DO YOU NEED A TRANSFUSION?

As I'm writing this, I look out the window and see it raining. Did you ever notice after a dry spell and we get a good rain, how all the crops, trees and plants seem to come to life and rejoice? I remember several years ago I had an F.F.A. boy who was in public speaking and wrote a speech entitled, "Water, the Life Blood of the Soil."

You know what happens when God doesn't send rain on the land. God has really blessed us because we have never experienced the kind of drought that there has been in some other sections of this world. Without water everything would perish. We have all kinds of good soft drinks, but nothing takes the place of a drink of cool water.

Now there are veins of water all down through the earth, just as you have veins in your body that blood flows through. If you have an accident and lose too much blood you will die. If you visit a hospital you will probably see someone who is being given blood. There is strength in blood.

Now I want us to look at another aspect of blood and how very important it is. Let us look in God's word many, many years ago. In scripture the mysterious sacredness which belongs to life is attributed to the blood. Deut. 12:23, "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh." God reserves it to Himself when allowing man's dominion over the lower animals, that he may through it make atonement for sin. Lev. 11:11-13, "They shall be even an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination. Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that shall be an abomination unto you, and these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination; the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray."

Let us now see what God's word says years later. God sent His Son to this earth to do something that no one else could do. The blood of Jesus was shed upon the cross as an eternal atonement for all mankind. Heb. 12:9. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood he entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Heb. 9:22, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

Now I want to ask each one that reads this an important question. Have you had a transfusion of Jesus Christ's blood in your life? Have you been born again? God's word says "the wages of sin is death" eternal death that will separate you from God. God also says, "the gift of God is eternal life." The person that wrote the song, "Nothing But The Blood" must have had an experience with God. This song says,

"What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." How true this is. Now unless you have repented of your sins and had a transfusion of Jesus Christ's blood you are still lost and doomed.

Rmember I said there is strength in blood; yes, there is eternal life in the blood of Christ. God has one plan of salvation. God doesn't force this on any person, but it is your choice to spend eternity in Heaven or Hell. This is just as real as the rising and setting of the sun each day.

Please read these scriptures: Acts 17:26, 20:28; Romans 3:25, 5:8-9; Ehpesians 1:7; I John 1:7; Revelations 7:14.

Remember life is uncertain and death is sure. Do you have any doubt at all about being saved? Please get that straightened out before it's too late.

Please accept my Jesus before it's too late.

August 1975

THE THREE "W's"

I. WORSHIP

True worship is a very important phase of a Christian's life. In many churches today church service has just become a ritual, a cut and dried program. Man has taken over and left the Holy Spirit out. You know Christ is the head of the church. John 4:24 - "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth." True worship is from the heart. A spiritual worship service can win the lost to Christ, while an unspiritual one can drive unbelievers away from Christ.

When your physical body is hungry, you supply it with food and water. The spiritual man's appetite can only be satisfied with God. Worship and a study of God's Word will feed the soul.

How would you define true worship? Here is a definition given by William Temple, a former Archbishop of Canterbury. He said: "For to worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God; to feed the mind with the truth of God; to purge the imagination by the beauty of God; to open up the heart to the love of God; to devote the will to the purpose of God." That just about covers everything.

II. WALK

How is your daily walk as a Christian? Romans 6:4 - Paul says "We are to walk in newness of life." Romans 8:4 - "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." I John 1:6,7 - "If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not know the truth; but if we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

III. WORK

This is an insulting word for a lot of people today. certainly work is important in supplying the necessities of life. When you were saved, God saved you for a purpose. We are to obey His commandments and be a worker in His kingdom. When God told Nehemiah to go rebuild the walls around Jerusalem, we see it was done in only 52 days because, Nehemiah 4:6 - "for the people had a mind to work."

We will have to give account to God for all our work. Eccl 12:14 - "For God shall bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or whether it be evil." God's word says it is impossible to please Him without faith. He also says faith is dead without works. James 2:26 - "For as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

How involved are you in carrying on God's work? Have you talked to a lost person lately about their salvation? Are you active in church activities or are you just a spectator? Remember, put worship first in your life, and everything else will follow.

CONTENTMENT

Do you know many people that don't seem to be discontented? What about yourself?

Did you ever notice a cow lying in a cool shade chewing her cud? Or a mockingbird in the top of a tree just singing away? To be content is to have that satisfaction and assurance in life.

I have talked to a lot of people in various occupations, and most of them seem to be discontent about some things in their work or home life.

Now I firmly believe that God's Word has the solution to all problems and situations. Within yourself you won't find contentment and peace. Only when Christ lives within you and you give Him complete control will you find them. I have been down with this stroke four years, and only through the strength of Christ have I been able to adjust myself to enjoy the good things of life and to have that hope and assurance that one day I will have a new and perfect body like unto Christ.

Paul said in Phil. 4:11 - "Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

I Timothy 6:6 - "But Godliness with contentment is great gain. Are you a Godly person?

A good lesson can be learned from Hebrews 13:5 - "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. We may fail God but He won't fail us.

Don't rely on worldly goods to make you content. Rely on God's promises and live for Christ one day at a time.

June 1975

THE BELIEVER'S SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Every believer constantly faces spiritual warfare. The world, the flesh and the devil are determined to discourage and defeat him. Unfortunately, many Christians suffer spiritual defeat because they fail to use the armor God has provided for them. Read Ephesians chapter 6.

Truth. Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life", John 14:6. Christ is the living word and the Bible is the written word, and these together form the believer's "girdle of truth."

Breastplate of Righteousness. We need to remember that our right standing with God is only because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. the Bible says, "But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. I Corinthians 1:30. Jesus Christ is made righteousness to the believer.

Shod Feet. Satan is out to destroy the peace in our hearts, He causes us to doubt and fret so that we are in turmoil of soul, thus part of the armor is to give us a settled walk that is peaceful. Ephesians 2:14 tells us that Christ is our peace.

Shield of Faith. The shield of faith refers to the Lord Jesus Christ who is God's provision for our protection. It is through faith in Jesus Christ that we are completely protected against the attacks of Satan. We take the shield of faith, then by trusting Christ and His word completely, which in turn protects us from Satan's fire tip arrows.

Helmet of Salvation. The helmet was for protecting the head which is the center of the intellectual life. A head wound is a serious matter because the body does not function properly if the head is not functioning. The helmet of salvation refers to Jesus Christ and reveals that He is the protection for this part of the body.

Sword of the Spirit. The sixth and final part of the armor to be taken by the believer is the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." The sword of the spirit is not an instrument to be placed in the

believer's hand; it too refers to the protection given by the Lord Jesus Christ, even as the other pieces of the armor refer to the aspect of Christ's protection. Notice what the sword of the Spirit is - "the word of God." The gospel of John refers to Jesus Christ as the "word." John 1:1-4. The word is referred to as "milk and meat." The word is spiritual food for the believer. Hebrews 4:12 says for the "word of God is quick (living) and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword." We must not be just hearers of the word, we must be doers also.

Do you pray for your pastor? He is the fore front of the battle because he has been called of God to head a congregation. As a leader he becomes a special target of Satan's most vicious at tacks.

1986

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

VERSE 10: Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

VERSE 11: Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

VERSE 12: For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

VERSE 13: Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

VERSE 14: Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

VERSE 15: And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace:

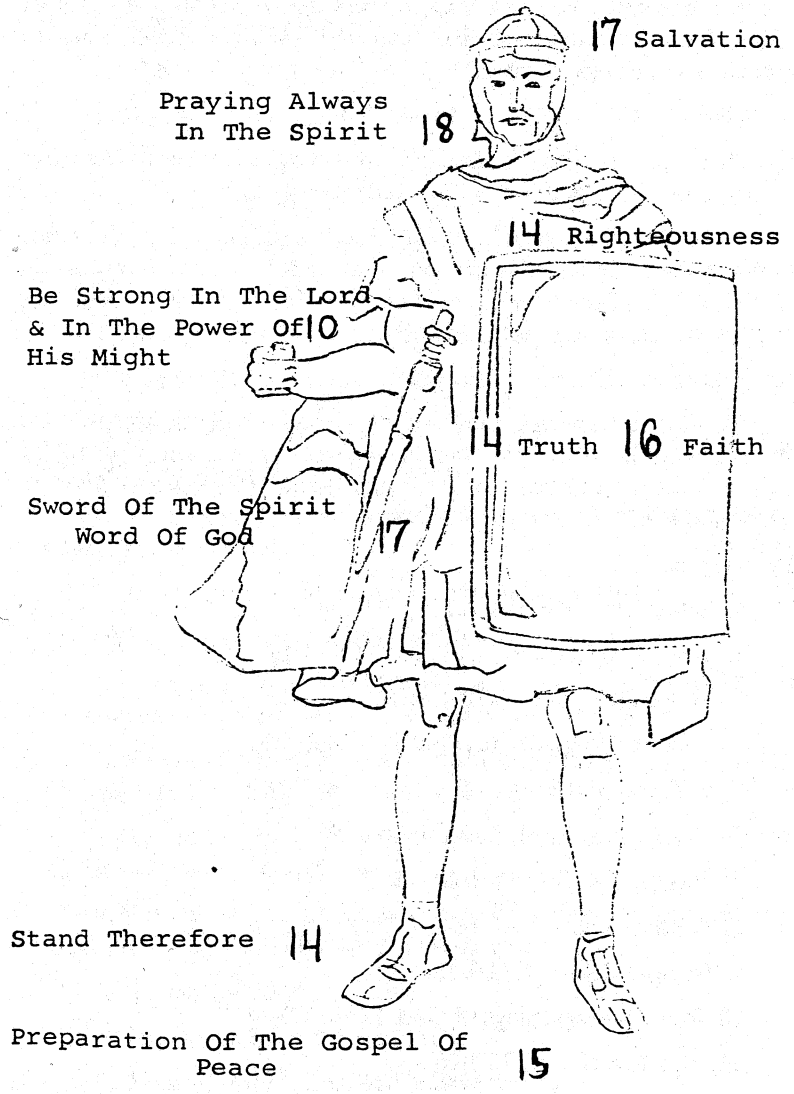
VERSE 16: Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

VERSE 17: And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

VERSE 18: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

EPHESIANS 6

The Christian's Armour



THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy spirit glorifies Jesus in and through the believer.

I. Who is He?

He is part of the Trinity. In John 14:16 Jesus says, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you forever." John 16:13 - "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall He speak. And He will show you things to come."

II. What is He?

He is a person with the characteristics of a person: Loved (Romans 15:30); Grieved (Ephesians 4:30); Quenched (I Thess. 5:19).

He also has the acts of a person: Searches us (I Cor. 2:10); Teaches (John 14:26); Leads and directs (Gal. 5:16); Makes intercession (Romans 8:26); Commands men (Acts 16:6-7); Calls men to work (Acts 13:2); Gives testimony (John 15:26)

III. Where is He?

He was from the beginning of time. The Holy Spirit lives with us. We received the Holy Spirit the day we were born again (Col. 1:27; I Cor. 6:19-20; Romans 5:8-10). Everyone has the Holy Spirit who is born again (John 7:37-39; John 14:15-16).

IV. Why is He?

1. Sets us free. Romans 8:2
2. Joins us with Christ. Eph. 2:22; Phil 1:19
3. Helps us. Eph. 1:19-20; Col. 2:6
4. Directs and guides us. Gal. 5:16; Gal. 5:25
5. Tells us we belong to God. Romans 8:11
6. Teaches us about Christ. John 15:26
7. Teaches us all truth. John 16:13
8. Guides in daily life. Acts 8:27-29
9. Brings forth fruit. Gal. 5:22
10. Reveals deep things of God. I Cor. 2:9-14
11. Teaches. II Tim. 2:24-26

The fact that Christ is in us is mentioned 164 times in the New Testament.

God uses seven words to describe the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the believer.

1. Gifts - Acts 10:45; Acts 2:38, Acts 11:17
2. Dwells in us - I Cor. 6:19-20; romans 8:9; romans 5:8-11; Col. 1:27

John 14:15-17

3. Seal - Eph. 4:30
4. Earnest - Eph. 1:13-14
5. Anointed - I Cor. 1:21-22
6. Baptize - Acts 1:5; I Cor. 12-13
7. Filled - Eph. 5:18

V. Why should I be filled?

1. Command from God's word - Eph. 5:18
2. Normal state of believer
3. The anointing empowers us for service.
4. In order that Jesus might be glorified through us.
5. Greater ability to exercise the gifts He has given us.

VI. What happens when we are filled?

1. Our love and appreciation for Jesus is greater. He becomes the main focus in our lives.
2. We have new boldness and power in witnessing.

VII. What are the conditions to be filled?

1. Confess all sin out of your life, even old ones, big or little, that were never confessed. We must be cleansed.
2. We must know what it means to be crucified and die to our selves - Romans 6; Gal. 2:20; Romans 12:1-2.
3. We must study God's word so we can grow as Christians and be continually filled - Gal. 5.
4. We must have consistent prayer life. when we pray we talk to God. When we read His word He talks to us.
5. We must yield to the Spirit.

VIII. How do we know we are filled?

1. We accept it by faith and believe we are.
2. Don't try to compare your experience with others.

IX. What is the evidence?

1. Others will see Jesus in you.

2. The Holy Spirit will tell us the things of and about Jesus - John 16:13-14.

X. How do I stay filled?

1. Study the word of God - Romans 8:1-2.

2. Attend church and worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

July 1975

THE WAR RAGES ON!

The war rages on. What war am I talking about? God's people and Satan's people.

First let me say that there is a continuous battle with yourself. If you have been born again you have Christ within you, and you still have this old sinful, carnal self to deal with. Only Christ can give us the strength to keep this carnal self under subjection.

Many people don't really realize what God's people are up against today. The sad thing is that this is because so many Christians are ignorant of God's word. A lot of people just think in terms of trouble among people. The apostle Paul wrote in Eph. 6:12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." The Bible frequently mentions the demonic activity of the spirit world, referring to demons and the leader of demons, Satan. Satan is powerful and is battling for the lives of men.

Satan has many people today trying to find the answer by being involved in drugs, witchcraft, spiritism, magic, and devil worship. Then many are addicted to astrology, fortune-telling and tarot cards. It is sad that so many people regard occult practices as harmless, when this is a part of Satan's scheme to lure people into spiritual captivity.

Keep this in mind - Satan sometimes uses very cunning ways to snare people. II Cor. 11:14 - "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." Remember how cunning he was in tempting Jesus. He offered Him good things, but Satan was trying to lure Jesus into acting independently of the Father,

All that Satan has to offer you is counterfeit. We are in a spiritual war. Satan is using three major war tactics: The occult trap, the religious trap, and the sin trap.

Satan is deceiving many people in false religions today. Remember, Satan is a spirit and he may cause people to have thrilling experiences that seem to come from the word of God. People get so caught up in these things that they take their eyes completely off of God.

"Now all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Remember, Satan was the originator of sin. It is Satan's plan to remind us of our sins and to get us in a depressed state of mind. Listen to this in I Peter 5:8 - "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Satan plays for keeps.

Now as mentioned, we are in a spiritual war, but we can win if we use the right ammunition. Acts 16:31, "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Saved from what? The bondage of sin, the chains of Satan and the agony of being eternally separated from God.

Col. 2:15 - "And spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Yes, Jesus won the victory when He died on the cross and shed His blood for us all. He was buried and rose up after the third day. So we are released from the bondage of sin, because all our sins were nailed to the cross. Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." If you trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior, Satan can no longer accuse you or make you feel guilty, because you have already been forgiven.

Eph. 1:3, "We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." Now know this from Eph. 4:30 - "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Praise God! For He will preserve and protect us until the day Jesus returns.

Salvation does not come to a person automatically. It is a free gift that you can accept or reject. Do you just know Jesus, or do you know Jesus and have accepted Him as your personal Savior? Without Christ you have no defense and you are totally under Satan's control.

Now Christian wake up to this - when you accept Jesus as your personal Savior, your old nature is crucified, and you have a new nature. This means you will talk differently, think differently, walk differently, and act differently, because the Holy Spirit dwells within you. Remember, Satan was defeated at the cross 2000 years ago.

Now Christians be prepared. Eph. 6:13 - "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand." Read in you Bible what this armor consists of.

SWEETER THAN HONEY

Most people eat three meals a day. Why do we eat food? We eat to grow and to be strong physically. We must also maintain our physical condition. The sad thing about a lot of people is that they are only concerned with the physical condition and completely neglect the most important which is their spiritual condition.

Do you love to read God's word? I love to read God's word and just let it be absorbed in my system. You will not grow in your spiritual life if you neglect studying God's word.

Honey is one of the sweetest foods and I love it.

Psalm 119:103 - How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey in my mouth.

Psalm 19:9-10 - The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired, are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Psalm 104:34 - My meditation of Him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord.

What about this for a young Christian:

I Peter 2:2-3 - As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Do you want to grow in your spiritual life or do you want to remain a babe? Try these:

1. Go to God in prayer daily.

2. Read God's word daily.

3. Obey God every moment.

4. Witness to Christ by your life and your speech.

5. Completely trust God for every detail in your life.

6. Allow God to control and empower your daily life (Holy Spirit)

You could call the Bible your Answer Book. If you want to know more about God - study God's word. Remember what Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." If you are not reading God's word daily, you are not growing spiritually and are missing out on something very sweet to your soul.

Psalm 119:103 - How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey in my mouth.

In summing up why God's word to me is sweeter than honey - God is in this book. His thoughts, His feelings, His heart are there too. His anger blazes from its pages of power. His love trembles in its tomes. His lamentations sigh and sob in its sentences. His power and wisdom throb in the whole of it.

It is a Living Book, and in reading it, we come in contact and communion with Him, who is Lord over all and blessed forever.

Let God's word be the guide in this life and you will be a happy Christian.

1984

WHOLENESS OR HOLINESS

The faith hath made thee whole. Matthew 9:22

Wholeness and holiness are identical: the one of the body; the other of the soul. They are closely related to the word health, and all may be procured through faith. Holiness, wholeness of heart, health - and all by faith. There are three steps to this blessed state of wholeness of soul.

First, we must believe that it is attainable; for we never feel morally bound to do, attempt, or choose, what we do not believe to be within our reach. But all questions on the matter are settled forevermore by such words as, "Be ye holy, for I am holy": "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

Second, we must consecrate ourselves to God. In other words, by the help of the Holy Spirit, we must determine and resolve that we will be wholly the Lord's. We must come to a fixed resolve to break away from every known sin; to walk, so far as we know them, in the way of God's commandments; to be and do and suffer all His righteous will. This must be our deliberate resolve for all coming time; and if we are unable to make the resolve, through the frailty of our nature and the strength of our old sins, we must a least tell God that we are willing for this to become our unvacillating attitude.

Third, we must believe, absolutely, that God does accept the consecration we have made, and will do all that He has promised, by infilling us with His Holy Spirit, and working in us that which is pleasing in His sight. Nay, we must not only believe that He will do it, we must ask and claim that He should do it. we must, like this woman, touch Christ and obtain His healing virtue. Amen.

1980

WHY IS LOVE GREATEST?

Any time you mention I Corinthians 13 you know it is called the Love Chapter. I Cor. 13:13, "And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

What a light must have shown on the Apostle's face as He broke into this exquisite idyll, this perfect poem of love! The change in tone and rhythm must have caused his amanuensis to look suddenly up into his master's face, and lo, it was the face of an angel. Why is love greatest?

Because it is the Crown of the other two, and includes them. Faith is the root; hope is the stem; love the perfect flower. You may have faith without hope, and hope without love; but you cannot have love apart from faith and hope.

Because it is likest God. God's nature is not specially charac terized by faith, because there is no uncertainty with His perfect knowledge; not by hope, because there is no future to His eternal existence. But God is Love; and to love is to resemble Him.

Because it will immeasurably outlast the other two. Human knowl edge at best but the spellings of babes will vanish in the perfect light of heaven. Eloquence will seem like the lispings of infancy. Prophecies will have no place, because all the landscape of the future will be revealed. Faith and hope will be lost in realization. Love only is forever.

Because love brings the purest rapture. "Where is heaven?" asked a wealthy Christian of his minister.

"I will tell you where it is," was the quick reply: "if you will go to the store and buy $50 worth of provisions and necessities and take them to that poor widow on the hillside, who has three of her children sick. She is poor and a member of the church. Take a nurse and someone to cook the food. When you get there, read the 23rd Psalm and kneel by her side and pray. Then you will find out where heaven is."

1980

A MAN OF GOD

It is really something to read and study about this great man David. I know he was a great man because God's word says he was a man of God. "David, the man of God." Nehemiah 12:12, 36, 37, 45, 46.

How long the influence of David has lingered over the world, like the afterglow of a sunset! Mark the characteristic in him which laid the foundation of his supremacy over the hearts of his countrymen. He was pre-eminently "a man of God." Notwithstanding his terrible fall, his people recognized that his salient characteristic was Godward. Would you be one of God's men?

1. Give All To God. Too many lives of piecemeal consecration, giving a bit here and a bit there, but never all. David surrendered himself to do God's will utterly, and in all, and so became a man after God's own heart. With what joy God's voice seems to quiver, as He says, "I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, who shall fulfil all my will." (Acts 13:22) without reserve, holding nothing back, yield yourself to God, to be and do, and suffer His will, whatever it may be.

2. Take All From God. It is not what we give to Jesus, but what we take from Him, that makes us strong, helpful, and victorious day by day. Accept this as a fact, that in Jesus, God has made all His fulness dwell. There is nothing we require, for life or godliness, that is not stored in Him; but the terrible loss of our lives is that we take so little. We have ourselves to blame if we are poor and miserable and blind and naked.

3. Use All For God. It sometimes appears as though Christian people were urged to yield themselves to God only that their lives might be more comfortable. But the supreme and final end in all surrender must be that His will be done, His glory promoted, and Himself magnified whether in life or death.

1980

LEARNING THROUGH SUFFERING (MY TESTIMONY)

What about tomorrow?

Sickness can be one of life's most distressing and humbling circumstances, both for the person who is afflicted and for the loved ones who stand on the side lines. This is particularly true of strokes, when both brain and body are affected. These two are intricately related for the brain is the power station that controls the members of the body.

I have learned something of the depths of humiliation and help lessness to which we poor mortals can fall. This personal account is intended to give you understanding and help in respond ing to any troubling situation the Lord may allow to come into your life.

I will never forget June 23, 1971. This was a time when a drastic change took place in my life. I had a massive stroke on my left side. The first two weeks my mind was almost blanked out. I could not remember where I was and who came to see me. I thought my time had come for me to leave this old world, but God wasn't through with me. I was in the hospital three months this time. To add to this trouble, my wife's father was in the hospital and had to have both legs amputated. He died while I was in the hospital. My wife's mother was in a convalescent home and that compounded the troubles.

My wife, Marie, couldn't be with me much with so many other obligations at home. We were living at Lumberton, Miss., and I was in the VA hospital in Jackson, Miss. You talk about some hard praying, I did some both day and night on that hospital bed in 1971. I will have to admit at times I was real low in the valley. I'm sure glad that I was Christian when this all happened. Truths that I once knew intellectually and academically, I have been learning by experience these past 13 years. There is a difference.

The Word of God has been my strong-hold in these difficult days, plus the loving care of my family.

Paul wrote, the outward man and inward man (2 Corinthians 4:16, Romans 7:22 and Ephesians 3:16) both need to be fed and each has it's own prescribed diet.

Sometimes I would get to thinking I was all alone in my suffer ing, but I read somewhere that there were 500,000 who have strokes each year. I Peter 4:12, "Beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to test you, as though some strange thing happen unto you." Because we are God's children, and because he permitted the trial, I knew He would also provide for our every need. Time seems to go by very slow in the hospital. My mind begins to recall what the scripture says about "waiting on the Lord." David learned to wait - Psalm 25:5 "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation: on these do I wait all the day." He found it to be a profitable experience. very slow in the hospital. My mind begins to recall what the scripture says about "waiting on the Lord." David learned to wait - Psalm 25:5 "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation: on these do I wait all the day." He found it to be a profitable experience. Psalms 27:14, "wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait I say on the Lord."

You may find it hard to wait on the Lord. I'm learning that "they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall

walk and not faint" - Isaiah 40:31. I'm thankful for more time to wait before the Lord in prayer.

One of my regrets is that I didn't take more time to lie down in the green pastures of God's word during those busy years when I was well. During these months and years of trial, He has enabled me to experience the preciousness and power of His truth. My good Shepherd has fed my soul and I have not lacked one thing that is necessary and good, the green pastures of the Shepherd's word are a sharp contrast to the dry desert waste lands of this world. I cannot say with the Apostle Paul, that in this world to be content - Philippians 4:11, but, I can testify that I'm learning "through Christ, who strengtheneth me." What about tomorrow? We don't know but we know who holds tomorrow. Live for Christ today. Take one day at a time.

GOD IS IN CONTROL!

God is the Creator and Controller of all the universe and all that is in it. He is the super power above all powers in every area of His creation. He is far more concerned with our welfare than we are ourselves. I do not expect to understand all about a lot of things until Jesus comes. Nothing in the universe happens by chance or accident, for every effect there is a cause. I have had to daily think about and meditate on God's word to console me and give me strength. Ephesians 1:11 & 12, "God worketh all things after the council of His own will." Yes, God is in control.

We Christians affirm our belief in the sovereignty of God, but our faith is challenged in times of natural upheavel, national disaster or personal affliction. Pain and poverty, disease and death, sorrow and suffering, all tend to cause us to think seriously about God as Creator and Controller of the world of which we are a part. It is not always easy to believe that God is in control. It still flashes on my mind, "your faith is being tested." Each day I think what a great God I have. God can do anything He wants to do, anytime He wants to do it, any way He wants to do it and for any purpose He wants to accomplish it. All down through the ages, God has been in control and still is today. Read Daniel and Amos. I'm learning that there is a large gap between studying truth intellectually and knowing that truth by personal experience. I have felt the need of being close to God each day. James 4:8, "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you." But how? I could pray and go to His word. God's word says, "to whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" - Hebrews 12:6. Yes, spiritual benefits are to be derived from trials and suffering.

LET COME WHAT MAY - I WILL TRUST HIM!

God wanted us to know that bad things do happen to good people. Even to the best of the good ones. I believe that is why He gave us the account of Job. Read it for yourself.

OH HOW I NEED THEE!

I still have to admit there have been times when I would feel so down and weak that tears would flow freely. This scripture comes to my mind - Hebrews 4:16, "let us, therefore, come boldly, unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Is today a time of need for you?

My Christian friend, are you acquainted with this place? I have been to this place many times and sometimes on my knees, lying in bed, out walking or riding in an automobile or even when fishing. I'm thankful that I have a place I can go in time of need. Notice the procedure of coming to the throne of grace. We are to come "boldly." We can speak freely and frankly to our Heavenly Father. We must never by shy about coming to this place. We don't even need to hesitate to tell God exactly what our need is. Hebrews 4:16 also teaches there is a purpose for coming to the throne of grace. That purpose is that we obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Mercy is one of our primary needs because of our sins and failures. God is rich in mercy. A further purpose of our coming to the throne of grace, is to find grace to help mercy. Mercy is for those failures of the past and grace is for the present hour of need.

Remember Paul's case. He suffered, he prayed, God did not remove the thorn if the flesh, but he received the assuring word from the Lord. II Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is sufficient for thee". Yes, he found grace for timely help. And that grace is available to you and me. God's grace sustains me even as I write these words.

Another thing we see in Hebrews 4:16 is that a person is waiting to meet and greet us at the throne of grace, He is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is on the right hand of God the Father at this moment interceding for you and I. Three ways Jesus works in our behalf are: (1) He meets our needs through His prayers. (2) He meets our needs through His power. (3) He meets our needs through His priesthood. Yes, I need Him at all times. He is only a breath away. He knows all about every detail of my life. He is waiting for you to come to Him in time of need. He knows you, He loves you. I could never make it with this stroke if I had to go alone, but Jesus is my Lord and He is ever present when I need Him.

HE CARETH FOR YOU!

When troubles mount and pain increases, followers of Christ sometimes feel that they are left to fight the battle alone. But we can take comfort and be encouraged by the sure undeniable truth that God cares. The promise is clearly given in this wonderful verse, "Casting all your cares upon Him, for He careth for you." - I Peter 5:7. I found this out especially the first year with this stroke.

It is the crippling sin of worry, which our Lord said chokes the Word, so that it becomes unfruitful. Paul said, "be anxious for nothing." Nothing means "not even one thing." Peter tells us, "casting all your cares upon Jesus." Every Christian who is passing through a severe trial needs the experience of Peter's text. He must place his burden upon Christ. Sometime if I begin to worry about my condition, I'm really saying that God doesn't care. But scripture says that He does care and that settles it. Yes, there is peace for the mind and comfort for the heart in knowing my Savior cares for me. Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there. He is more able to handle it than I am. When you have done this, then you can claim Philippians 4:7, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Yes, our loving Lord cares.

ALL YOUR NEEDS!

One of the many promises in the Bible that has strengthened and sustained God's children for centuries in Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." This has been true all down through the ages and is true today. I sure have stood on this promise as I have not been able to work any the past 13 years. Some fine Christian men and women have never learned to trust God for all their needs. Notice "First" God is the provider. Sometimes people inside our churches, as well as outside, know about God, but they do not know Him as Lord. Paul knew Him as the provider of all his needs. The "Second" important truth found in Philippians 4:19 found in this promise, "My God Shall Supply." One who is rightly related to God will have his needs supplied. There is to be no doubting, no hesitation, no apprehension. Our Lord said, "ask and it shall be given you: seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you" - Matthew 7:7. "And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive" - Matthew 21:22. There are positive assurances. My God is the all knowing provider; therefore He knows exactly what I need. The "Third" thing I see, is the "Provision." The apostle summed it up in three words: ALL YOUR NEEDS. He didn't say your wants, but your needs. We are never alone in our needs, we always have access to the provider and His provision.

CONTROL OF ALL THINGS!

Another scripture that has really blessed me through the years is Romans 8:28, "and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose." Also, Romans 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that he might be the first born among many brethren."

Problems and pressures are felt in all areas of life. Tears, trials and tribulations are seen on every hand. Despite the infirmities of life, however, no Christian needs to fear or live a life of defeat. We are assured that all of life's hardships and headaches and heavy burdens are "working together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Here we see the providence of God at work. Here we learn that we must never think about, "Chance or Luck" regarding those things that touch our lives.

To really let this Scripture digest in our heart and mind, I want to point out five distinct things mentioned in Romans 8:28. You can study and meditate on them. First, notice the positive note "We Know." It is not something we blindly accept merely because someone says it. This knowledge comes through faith in the word of God. We know it because God said it. I believe it and that settles it. The second thing to consider is "The People Involved" and they are "To them that Love God." We may be certain that God has never stopped loving mankind; nevertheless, we must remember that all the people who will go to Hell will not be there because God did not love them. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema," I Corinthians 16:22. Who are these Christians who love God? They are those who live in daily fellowship with him and who walk with him in trust and obedience. Our Lord said if you love me, keep my commandments. The third factor to consider is, "The Particulars Involved." What percentage of those things that touch the Christians are working together for his good? The answer is "All Things." This means all of them without exception! Consider Paul's life in this matter. He begged God to remove the thorn in his flesh, but God did not. How many of us could say as Paul said? "Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong." II Corinthians 12:10. Think about the case of Joseph and his brothers. The fourth thing to consider is "The Process Involved." Our key verse, "All things work together for good." Now nowhere does the text state that all things are good; but rather, that all things work together for good. Whatever the particulars involved may be. Whether pain, poverty, persecution, stroke, cancer or even death, they are not good in themselves. The idea is that God by His own

supernatural processes intermingles all things in our lives for the ultimate good. To put it another way, God makes each thing in our lives contribute to the good for He is controlling the process. Only He knows the end from the beginning. Thus the bitter elements of life as well as the sweet blend together to produce the desired results. Remember, the "key word" is "together" to understand the process involved. David said, "It is good for me that I have been af flicted that I might learn thy statutes." Psalm 119:71. The fifth thing to consider is "The Purpose Involved." The text tells us that it is " His Purpose" that we should be "conformed to the image of His Son" Romans 8:29. This will happen when Christ comes.

If we love the Lord as we ought to love Him, we should say with a glad heart, "Work On, Oh God." Blend all things together, the bitter with the sweet until you have made me like the Lord Jesus Christ.

As I write this, it has been 13 years since I had this stroke. I'm completely paralyzed on my left side. The work of God is my stronghold. God remains faithful and His grace continues to be sufficient. II Corinthians 1:4 says, "who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort where with we ourselves are comforted of God."

1971 - 1984

PEACE

In Psalm 23:2 I read - "He leadeth me beside still waters," I think about when I was a boy, I used to fish on a creek. When I would come to a bend in the creek there would always be a large place that would be calm and almost still. I would like to fish in these places. God will give us calmness and peace of mind.

Isaiah 26:3 - "Thou wilt keep him in perfect space, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Remember the song - "Only Trust Him."

If you are loaded down with trouble and burdens, there is a solution for peace in your life. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus said, "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

We can have peace, but there are certain requirements. Phil. 4:6-7 - "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your request be made to God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

If we have spiritual fruits, one of these is the peace we have. Romans 15:13 - "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy ghost."

I have found by personal experience, even though I've been down with a stroke, I have the peace that God offered to all who would come to Him through Jesus Christ our Savior.

WALKING WITHOUT FALLING

Please read and study Jude. Thank God for this noble army of faithful ones ! Of these, God says that their reward shall be that here they will keep you from falling and up there present you faultless (vs. 24).

Keep yourselves in the love of God (vs 21). There is a strong current running. If you keep in its main stream, it will bear you gently but irresistibly forward; but there are so many side- currents, that we must be very careful not to be swept out of it. You are in it by grace, now keep in it.

Build yourselves on your most Holy Faith. Build, not on your emotions; nor on your conceptions of what may be right or wrong; nor on your experience, but on the strong and massive outlines of the faith once delivered to the saints (vs.3). We may well contend for it, if it is to yield the foundation of our spiritual upbuilding. In other words, you must come back again and yet again, to the teachings of the Word of God, and especially of the life of Jesus.

Pray in the Holy spirit. Wait at the divine footstool until your prayers are indicated by Him, and the spring arises from the depths of God. And whensoever you feel the inward movement of God's spirit, yield to it. He will correct and prune from your prayers all that should not be in them. He will lead you out in the intercession for others, and for the glory of Christ of which you did not know yourself capable. To pray in the Holy Spirit is to let the Holy Spirit pray in you.

Look for Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Always be on the outlook. Let your soul stand on tiptoe in anticipation of His coming. Let yours be the words of the Canticles, "I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my Beloved, that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister; my love, my undefiled." The heart that waits for Jesus, will not have to wait in vain. And even in the act of waiting, it will be kept in the love of God, which is also eternal life.

1980

RX FOR HAPPINESS

When we go to a doctor, we expect him to prescribe something to make us feel better. Have you talked to Dr. Jesus lately? Did you ever see anyone who didn't want to be happy? He said he would not only give us life, but abundant life here in this world. You may have a prescription for happiness and if not try this one.

1. Accept Jesus Christ as director of your life. Get all the sin out of your system and be a real Christian.

2. Start loving people. The only person you love now, may be yourself. It is true that people who seem to love themselves too much really hate themselves.

3. Read the paper and pray for every unfortunate person mentioned in the news.

4. List all the people you know who are having difficulty and go see them. You may use one night a week, or a Saturday or Sunday afternoon in visiting around your community anyone you know who is having a hard time. Just loving them - a small gift would help.

5. Take your pay check whenever you get it and set aside 10% for the Lord. Most people will tell you this wås hard for them to start, but now many wonderful things have happened since I start ed this. God will pour out his blessings and you will have a happy life.

Never think "lack" - always think "prosperity."

Always build your life and thoughts around God's abundance. Love and serve Him and add to that the love and service of human beings and you will know the best in life.

P.S. Don't let the seed prevent you from enjoying the watermelon!

1984

PEACEMAKERS OR TROUBLEMAKERS

I guess all down through time Satan has tried to destroy churches by bringing division among the members, especially in business meetings. I know of a lot of churches that completely split up. I can almost hear a somber James scolding, "My brethren, these things ought not to be this way", (James 3:10). Clearly, God is looking for better behavior than this from His children for "God has called us to peace")II Cor. 7:15). Jesus in fact, called His followers to be known for their peaceableness when he said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9).

The peacemaker is one who continues in peace with God through an attitude of submission and obedience. Even for the Christian there is no peace without the proper relationship - Christ's lordship and our servanthood.

The peacemaker has received a new and peaceful nature, for he has the spirit of peace and he is a follower of the Prince of peace. He seeks peace with all men (See I Peter 3:11 & Romans 12:1-8) and among believers is diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3)

First, you can serve as a peacemaker by encouraging right relationships between other believers and God. There may be some who have never been reconciled to God (II Cor. 5:20), thus they are children of wrath! You can expect them to be troublemakers rather than peacemakers within the flock. You can seek to re store your straying brother in a spirit of gentleness (Gal. 6:1). Don't leave all the difficult work up to your pastor.

Second, you can serve as a peacemaker by submitting and encouraging others to submit to the leadership of your church. (Hebrews 13:17).

Third, you can serve as a peacemaker by submitting to, and by encouraging others to submit to your brothers and sisters in the church (Ephesians 5:21).

Fourth, you can also serve as a peacemaker by refusing to be a talebearer. Proverbs 26.20 describes how a peacemaker responds to talebearing. "For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer (talebearer), contention quiets down." Simply put, the peacemaker refuses to "pass it on." Don't say, "I shouldn't say this, but.... If you shouldn't say it, don't say it.

Fifth, you can serve as a peacemaker by refusing to be a whisperer. Read Proverbs 16:28. A slanderer separates intimate friends.

Sixth, you can serve as a peacemaker by refusing to be an accountant. In Proverbs 10:12 we read that love covers all transgressions.

In the Old Testament and the New Testament, the principle is the same; the peacemaker, motivated by love, does not keep a logbook on the sins of others.

Satan hates the church of Jesus Christ and is constantly seeking to destroy it; members against members.

Jesus looks on the inside of man and sees if he has a pure heart and a clean heart - Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way of everlasting."

If you want life to mean more to you even though you are down with some kind of ailment, you must accept God's plan. If you have not confessed your sins and accepted Jesus as your personal savior, this is the first step. Many accept an intellectual religion, a form of godliness, when the heart is not cleansed. Let it be you prayer - "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

DOCTOR! WHAT'S MY TROUBLE?

This is a very common question asked of doctors today. Most all hospitals stay full and if you go to a clinic, you have to have an appointment to see a doctor. Some people have an idea that doctors know all the answers to all ailments. There is no doctor that knows it all. Will Rogers said, "Everybody is ignorant about some things."

We should thank God for all the good doctors, nurses, therapists, and all others that help treat the sick. It takes real dedicated people to be good in this field of work.

I entered Mississippi Methodist Rehabilitation Center Hospital as a stroke patient. I've never been in a hospital where there is as much a friendly atmosphere. I was there for five weeks.

While in the hospital I met people from all over the State and who were in various occupations. There are many kinds of physi cal conditions in this hospital; strokes, broken necks, some with one leg, some paralyzed all over from car accidents, some para lyzed from tumor of the brain, some who can't walk because of arthritis, and many other ailments.

In order for a doctor to find our your trouble, he starts looking for symptoms. Some may show up on outward appearances and some will only show up by looking inside by means of X-ray. even with all the modern techniques in modern science and medicine, the doctor may not know for sure what to do.

As you notice, I've been speaking about physical troubles. Now there is another side of the picture I want to consider and it is the most important. That is the spiritual part. Now there is one doctor that can give you eternal life and I call him Dr. Jesus. There are more people who are spiritually sick than there are physically sick. If you want to feel better, even though you are in a wheel chair, paralyzed, or whatever your ailment may be, get acquainted with Dr. Jesus and get your spiritual life in order.

As a stroke patient, my advice would be to live one day at a time and completely turn your life over to God, and put your whole trust and faith in Him, knowing that He is true to His promises. Always have hope and have love for people.

WHAT WILL YOUR ANSWER BE?

Romans 14:10-12."But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why does thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So that everyone of us shall give account of himself to God."

It seems to me there are more unconcerned people today, who profess to be Christians than any time in my life time.

Referring to Matthew 25, the saved will be on one side and the lost on the other. How will you answer these questions? Did you help those that needed food? Did you show interest to those people that were new in your community? Did you help those people that needed clothes? Did you show interest to those that were in prison? Did you help the widows? Did you visit the sick and help them that were not able to work? Did you visit and witness to lost people?

Now if we bear the name Christian, which means Christ-like, Jesus is our example and he tells us how to live and how to treat our fellow man. Let us make an analysis of our life and see how we will answer these questions.

Jesus' main interest was in helping people. What is yours? Jesus says we serve Him by serving others and if we refuse, He says in Matt. 2:45-46, "then shall He answer them, saying, 'verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these ye did it not to me.' And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

What is your main goal in this life? Is your main interest in obeying God's commandments or is your main interest your business, your cattle, your land, building up a big bank account or having as much worldly pleasure as you can?

We better take God's word seriously because He said everyone that says Lord, Lord shall not enter in. Are you laying up treasures in heaven? If so, you are doing the will of God.

HAVE YOU OPENED YOUR PACKAGE?

Each year about this time the shopping rush begins. People go to and fro looking for something to give for a Christmas present. Usually, these presents are wrapped in beautiful paper and tied with a pretty ribbon.

Let's say, for example, you just left your package under the tree or you accepted the package but never removed the wrappings. You would miss out on all the joy and pleasure of receiving it.

Christmas as I see it: there was a gift for each of us left under the tree of life 2000 years ago by Him whose birthday we cele brate on December 25th. The gift was withheld from no man. Some have accepted the gift and carry it around but have failed to remove the wrappings and look inside to discover the hidden splendor. The packages are all alike. In each is a scroll on which is written, "All that the Father hath is thine." Take and live!

Ever since I received this package it has been "joy unspeakable and full of glory!" I Peter 1:8.

December 1978

GOD IS SUFFICIENT

"And David said to Solomon his son, 'Be strong and of good courage, and do it; fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.' " I Chron. 28:30.

It is very comforting to take these words to our heart; especially when we connect them with the foregoing ones about the pat tern, and apply the whole passage to the temple building of our own lives. For each of us, too, there is a pattern, an ideal, a design, based on the possibilities which God sees to be within our reach; for each, too, there is abundance of stored provision; but we are not always strong to do. In Jesus, there is the com plete ideal of human life; of the Child at Nazareth; of the Serv ant in the workshop; of the Lover in His affection for His Church; of the Friend, the Sufferer, the Patriot, the Savior. Go forth and imitate Him!

Sometimes our heart and flesh fail us in the mid-passage of life. Once the energy and vigor of youth promised to sustain and carry us to the end of life, without fear or failure; but these die down, and we

wonder how the remainder of the life-plan can be fulfilled. And the one sufficient answer is - God. He who helped our fathers to the very end help us; He who did not fail or forsake them, will never leave or forsake us, until all the work of life which He has planned is finished.

It is probable that you will do better and more enduring work henceforth then you have ever done in the heyday and plenitude of youthful power, if you let God work all through you to His own glory. You have no need for despondence, God is sufficient. Oh to write this down on the tablets of the heart - God is; God is here; God is all sufficient; God has begun and will finish! God has promised that He will never leave nor forsake us; therefore we may boldly say, "God is my helper, I shall not fear what man shall do unto me."

1980

CHRISTIAN, STOP SINNING

It is important that we live close to God at all times. I Cor. 15:34, "Awake to righteousness and sin not: for some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame."

I guess it is man's nature to love darkness because he thinks that he can get by with more sin. If we are Christians, we have that light (Jesus) that will illuminate us. I Thes. 5:5, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: We are not of the night, nor of darkness.

Christian, wake up and be alert. Romans 13:11-12, "And that knowing the time, that now is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light."

Christian, prepare yourself to stand up and fight against the devil and his evil forces. Eph. 6:13, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand."

Stop and know that we will be judged by God as Israel was. Ezekiel 18:30-31, "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, everyone according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from all your transgressions, where by you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will you die, oh house of Israel?"

We should live each day in such a way that there wouldn't be anything to be ashamed of if Christ would come. I John 2:28, "And now little children, abide in Him; that when He shall ap pear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God's ideal; yet God declares us "not guilty" of offending Him, if we trust in Jesus Christ, who in his kindness freely takes away our sins. For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to end all God's anger against us. He used Christ's blood and our faith as the means of saving us from His wrath.

ENCOMPASSED BY GOD'S WORD

"Bind them continually upon thine heart, tie them about thy neck." Proverbs 6:21. If the son addressed here is bidden to thus care for the words of his parents, how much more should we ponder those of God as given us in God's blessed book.

When Thou Walkest, It Shall Lead Thee. It would be a good policy for all Christians to read the book of Proverbs through every month for practical directions on the path of life. A West-Coun tryman said of this collection of wise words, "If any man shall master the book of Proverbs, no man shall master he." Take for instance, the weighty councils of the first five verses. How many lives would have been saved from bitter anguish and disap pointment if only they had been ruled by them! Let every young man also ponder the closing verses. Let us all meditate more constantly on the word of God.

When Thou Sleepest, It Shall Watch Thee. The man who meditates on the Word of God by day will not be troubled by evil dreams at night. Whatever unholy spirits may prowl around his bed, they will be restrained from molesting him whose head is pillowed on some Holy word of God. And on awakening, the Angel of Revelation will whisper words of encouragement and love.

And When Thou Awakest, It Shall Talk With Thee. The heart is accustomed to commune with itself about many things, but when the mind is full of God through His word, it seems though the monologue becomes a dialogue. To all our wonderings, fears, questionings, answers come back from the infinite glory in words of scripture. Some wear amulets about their necks to preserve them; but the Word of God is both a safeguard and choice treasure.

1980

BREAD OF LIFE

PROMISES

God's plan or man's plan - which?

The one thing that causes a lot of conflict in a Christian's life is that he or she wants to live a life to suit themselves without consulting God. God has a plan for you - Psalm 37:23: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and He delighteth in his way."

Did God promise to guide you? Yes indeed - Psalm 32:8, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye." Now your life must be a totally sur rendered life for this to happen.

Let us look at some guiding instructions for a Christian. Prov erbs 3:5-6 - (1) "Trust in the Lord with all tine heart"; (2) "Lean not to thine own understanding"; (3) "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."

In these trying times men need wisdom. God's Word says: "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." In many places in God's Word He says to ask. James 1:5 says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbrai deth not, and it shall be given to him."

Now another way in which we can receive His promises is being in His will. Romans 12:1-2 tells us how to know His will: (1) Present your bodies to God; (2) Be not conformed to this world; (3) Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. Why? That you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

You can miss God's plan for you. God gives you the opportunity to serve Him. Be faithful and accept His leading. One thing for sure, God will not force you to fit into His plan.

You can miss God's choice for you through sin and neglect. It is God's desire that each of us have a life of blessings and a full and abundant life.

There are some things God wants us to do on our own free will because we are Christians, and there are other things that He commands us to do. Do you remember the trouble Jonah got into for not obeying God's command? Be still and listen to what God's plan is for you in this life.

November 1975

BREAD OF LIFE

A YARDSTICK FOR A CHRISTIAN

Certainly attending church services is important in the life of a Christian, but this is only one phase.

Let us consider the fact if you were arrested and were on trial and accused of being a Christian. Would there be enough evidence in your life to prove you were a Christian?

Now if you are a Christian, I want you to consider these virtues - spiritual and natural.

SPIRITUAL VIRTUES:

Faith - Mark 9:23 - "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

Hope - Romans 8:24-25 - "For we are saved by hope; for what a man seeth, why doeth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

Charity or Love - I Cor. 13:13 - "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, but the greatest of these is charity."

NATURAL VIRTUES:

Wisdom - James 1:5 0 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Temperance - Phil. 4:4 - "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."

Justice - John 7:24, 51 - "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." "Doeth not our law judge any man; before it hear him, and know what he doeth?"

Courage - II Timothy 1:7 - "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Patience - Psalm 37:7-9 - "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." "Seek from anger, and forsake wrath; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." "For evil doers shall be cut off; but they that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth."

Humility - Micah 6:8 - "He hath showed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doeth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Chastity - Exodus 20:14 - "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

If you will take the time to read Col. 3:12-17, you will especially be blessed concerning the Christian virtues. You will find how much easier it will be to get along with other people.

June 1976

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

Jesus said, "Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat and the body more than raiment." Luke 12:22-23.

"Whereas you know not what shall be on the tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even like a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." James 4:14.

Jesus said, "I am come that they may have life and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:10

HAVING A MORE ABUNDANT LIFE

"If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you." Now, let us see how this is done.

If You Abide In Me:

1. Continually being aware of His presence.
2. Confessing sins daily.
3. Trusting Him implicitly.
4. Requires a conscious effort on our part.
5. Cannot neglect to read God's word.
6. Cannot neglect to pray.
7. Meditate upon Him.
8. Praise Him.
9. Love Him
10. Remember Jesus said, "Without me you can do nothing" and they drew upon His strength.

My Words Abide In You:

1. Having His word so firmly implanted in our minds.
2. Having a desire to obey and honor His word burning our hearts.
3. Things we ask are in complete harmony with that which Christ himself has spoken to.

4. The truth Jesus proclaimed must be a part of us.
5. Remain in our consciousness and influence us in every area of our lives.

RESULTS

1. Our hearts are filled with gratitude.
2. We praise and worship the Lord.
3. We confess our sins.
4. We pray for others as well as ourself.
5. We find it impossible to hold grudges.
6. We don't even consider doing what is immoral.
7. We won't want that which will bring harm to someone else.
8. We desire only those things that will glorify God.
9. I John 5:14-15.

The final test of our lives will not be how much we have lived, but how we lived; not how stormy our lives have been, but how much bigger better and stronger these trials have left us; not how much money, fame or fortune we have laid up here on earth, but how much treasure we have laid up in heaven. If we are to survive the atomic age, we must have something to live by and to live for. We must stand aside from the world's conspiracy of fear and hate and grasp once more the great monosyllables of life: faith, hope and love. Men must live by these if they live at all under the crushing weight of history.

WHAT ARE YOU WORTH?

Matthew 16:26, "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul. Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

Are you afraid of tomorrow? Do you fear uncertainty? Why do you suppose God let you be born? Why are you where you are? What is your purpose in living? Where are you headed? What are you trying to accomplish? What goals do you have for your life? What is your reason for living? Read Hebrews 12:1-3. Is your life an investment of time which cannot be continued one second were it not for the will of God?

As Christians we are a part of God's great plan. God knows pre cisely what we need in our life experience, our life race. The devil will try to discourage us in the race we are on. We must all learn to endure. Notice something else here, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. Hebrews 12:2.

Who do you think got you up when you got down? Who keeps on enabling you? Who is the source of your supernatural energy. It is almighty God. Jesus runs along with you. When you stumble and fall, He reaches down lovingly and picks you up saying, that is the direction, just keep going.

And at the end of the race Jesus is there to welcome you and to receive you.

HOW HOLY ARE YOU?

What about this thing of being a Holy Christian? The one thing that has bothered me is the fact that my Christian life is not holy enough.

What does holiness mean to you? It really means separating from sin and consecration to God. Did you know it is an obligation as a Christian to be like God? "For I am the Lord your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." (Lev. 11:44). Those who assume the obligations will be set apart. Psalms 4:3 says, "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself, the Lord will hear when I call unto him."

It is a requirement of all who would see God to "Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). Now keep this in mind, if you have never been born again you are wasting your time trying to live a holy life. John 3:3 tells us: "Unless you are born again, you can never get into the kingdom of God."

I Peter 1:14-17 - We need to obey God because we are His children. We are not to slip back into our old ways, but be holy now in every thing you do, just as the Lord is holy, who invited you to be His child. He himself has said, "You must be Holy for I am Holy". Remember you heavenly Father is no respecter of persons and judgeth according to every man's work, so act in reverent fear of Him from now on until you get to heaven.

1979

COMMITMENT AND TRUE WORSHIP AND ASSURANCE

If a person has an up-tight feeling it is probably because of unconfessed sin in his life.

Jesus came to tell up-tight people that they can be free; free to live, free to enjoy, free to have life abundantly.

He tells us there is an answer to being uptight. You can be upright. That means you can be in good standing with God again. Your sins can be forgiven and forgotten.

I John in the Bible is sort of a check list so people can examine their faith. In Chapter 1, verses 5-7 God spells out what up rightness really involves. It is made pointedly plain that right standing with Him means commitment to God; it involves community, a fellowship with other Christians and it comes only through a cleansing of sin by Jesus Christ.

He is light and in Him is no darkness at all. He is completely good.

Everything He does is because He is Love, He is good. He is truth. He really wants you to have the best kind of life that never ends.

If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not know the truth.

John is also saying that those who say they know God, but do not live godly lives are living a lie. Maybe there are false ideas about your faith.

One thing for sure, you can't isolate God. Worshipping God is not just going to a certain place to do certain things. Real worship is a life committed to Him - daily walked according to His will.

For many, worship is going to a certain place on Sunday. You wear nice clothes. You say nice things to people. You wouldn't think about telling a smutty joke, telling gossip or cursing because this is a church building, God's house, where God is present. The barber shop is different. The beauty parlor is different. The plant is different. The school is different. No one thinks much of God being there.

If that is the way you approach life, my friend, then you are believing a lie. The truth is God is everywhere. A Christian has a need for fellowship and worship and he is aware that God's presence is with him...every day and every minute. The highest act of worship is in living those days for Him.

Jesus told in the Bible how we are to act outside the church because of our faith.

I'm afraid there are those who have accepted some facts about Jesus but have not had a spiritual birth. Remember the devil believed all the facts about Jesus and you know the devil is not a Christian.

Here is the good news for Christianity. If you want life, stop trying to achieve it. Let God give it to you. Come to Him through Jesus Christ and He will cleanse you of your sins. He will make you a new creature so you can live a life of commitment to Him. He will make you one of His family; people who love each other, need each other and care about each other.

January 1979

TOO BUSY

"As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." I Kings 20:40.

This was likely enough to happen on a battlefield. It would not be possible to hold your prisoner, and to busy yourself about other things at the same time. This man in the prophet's para ble, made a great mistake to concern himself about a number of trifles, when so serious a matter as his own life depended on giving all his attention to the custodianship of the prisoner entrusted to his care. But is it not thus that men miss the main end of life?

Busy here and there and life is gone. Many spend their days in mere trivialities. Like children, they dig in the sand; like the butterfly, they flit from flower to flower. A round of visits, a few novels, a good many hours of light gaiety; vanity fashion, and amusement - these fill their hours, the days flash by and life is gone. They have nothing to show for it.

Busy here and there, and the chance of saving others is gone. Lives touch lives for the chief purpose that one should influence the other. But too often, we deal only with superficialities, busying ourselves in the slightest interests, but not seeking the salvation of those with whom we associate. The dance, the game, the business relationship, monopolize our thoughts and our friends are swept from us in the eddying whirl of life's battle, and are gone.

Busy here and there, and the knowledge of God is gone. Remember how the birds caught away the seek of the kingdom; and be sure that, in the same way, the cares and riches of this world, and the lost of other things may enter in, and destroy the impression made on the heart. The ephemeral interests of life press hard on its real interests. Like boys, we squander in trifling the hours given to prepare for an examination on which all the future must turn.

1980

WAGES AND GIFT

When we think about wages, we think about doing some kind of work and getting paid for this work. It is a common expression to ask someone "What does your job pay?"

Now when we think of a gift, we think of something received free. People give gifts on special occasions or just for love's sake.

Now let us take these two words and think about them in a spiritual sense, and see what God's Word says. Romans 6:23; "For the wages of sin is death; and the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. The downfall of many people comes from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Now if you choose to serve sin all your life, your pay off is death and you will spend eternity in Hell.

We read in God's word where the sin of one man, Adam, caused death to be king over all, but all who will take God's gift of forgiveness and acquittal are kings of life because of this one man Jesus Christ.

We read in I Cor. 15:21-22; Death came into the world because of what one man (Adam), and it is because what this other man, (Christ) has done that now there is the resurrection from the dead.

We read in II Tim. 1, everyone dies because all of us are related to Adam, being members of his sinful race, and wherever there is sin, death results. But all who are related to Christ will rise again. Thank God because our savior Jesus Christ, broke the power over death and showed us the way of everlasting life through trusting Him.

We read in I John 5:11-12: And what is it that God has said? That He has given us eternal life, and that this life is in His Son. So whosoever has God's Son has life; whoever does not have His Son, does not have life.

If you want eternal life you have to accept God's free gift on His terms. Remember life is uncertain and death is sure in this world.

BREAD OF LIFE
IS YOUR CHRISTIANITY SHOWING?

If you are a born again believer, this will apply to you. Let us consider some things that if done by every congregation would make a tremendous difference.

What preparation do you make before you go to church? Just make a check and see how few people make any preparation for worship.

Most people sleep late, get up in a hurry to get ready, then rush down the road. I want you to try this and see the difference worship will mean to you. Get up thirty minutes early, get your mind on God, read His word, then pray for yourself, your pastor and all the people that will meet in worship.

Why do we come to church service? Is it a matter of habit, a burden of duty, a hallmark of respectability or the satisfaction of seeing some friends? We should come seeking God. It should be a deliberate attempt to come out of the world and find contact with God. We should come seeking a blessing.

If you want church worship to mean the most to you, you must come determined to give all of yourself. We should come determined to give our interest, our prayer, our devotion, our sympathy. True worship is in spirit and in truth.

Sometimes we hear people say, "I've stopped going to church because I don't get anything out of the services." We might well ask them, "What have you tried to give to the services in loving devotion and in humble fellowship with your fellowmen?"

If we bring not only our physical bodies, but also our hearts, our love, our devotion and our prayers to the services of the church, we shall certainly go out again in the company of Him who is "The Light of the World."

Let me ask you again, "Is your Christianity showing?" Not only at church, but at home, at work, and everywhere.

April 1976

THE DISCIPLINED CHRISTIAN LIFE

I taught school for 31 years and during that time I can't think of many discipline problems that I ever had. This is something very important if students are going to learn. This discipline thing is also very important in being the kind of Christian God wants us to be.

Open your Bible to Psalms 19 and I will list some levels of discipline.

1. Verse 7 - "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." I'm not perfect, you are not perfect, but when I hold my Bible, which contains God's words, this is perfect. You can't be a disciplined Christian without getting into God's word.

2. Verse 7 - "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

3. Verse 8 - The statutes of the Lord are right rejoicing the heart."

4. verse 8 - "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eye."

5. Verse 9 - "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever."

6. Verse 9 - The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Some of you may recall the experience of plowing with a horse or mule. My dad believed in laying off straight rows. We would put up a tall pole with a white cloth tied to the end of it. This would be put up on the other side of the field. I would start plowing toward the pole keeping my eye on the pole and keeping the mule lined up with the pole.

I say this because it illustrates something. If you live a disciplined Christian life, your eyes have to be focused on Jesus Christ all the time. Remember, He said the way is straight and narrow. God left His word as a guide. Unless we study God's Word, we will never grow spiritually and will not know the guide lines for our life. We read in Deuteronomy 10:12, "What doeth the Lord thy God require of thee?" (1) Fear the Lord thy God. (2) Walk in His ways. (3) To love Him. (4) Serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

A disciplined Christian is very careful about speech and even our meditations. He must realize Jesus is in control and even our strength comes from Him.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength and my redeemer. Psalm 19:14.

September 1978

HAVE YOU BEEN X-RAYED LATELY?

If you go in a hospital for a check-up, more than likely you will be x-rayed. These x-rays will show the doctor some things about your body that is not visible on the outside.

I well remember in June 1971, I had a kidney stone attack and had to go into the hospital. I had a severe stroke on my left side while in the hospital. They x-rayed my kidneys to see if there were any other stones. They made several brain scan x-rays to see what damage was done to the brain. God has blessed us with so many wonderful machines to help keep people healthy.

Did you ever hear the expression, he or she must have x-ray eyes? I will never forget an English teacher I had back in high school. She could almost look a hole through a student.

I want to introduce you to one that can not only look right into your mind and heart but He knows all about our life, past and future. This man is called Jesus, my Lord. Remember when Jesus met the woman at the well. He told her all about her past life. There are a lot of folks who think they can even fool Jesus today.

You may fool me and even sometimes fool the preacher, but there is no hiding and no fooling Jesus. He sees you day and night because He cares for you. He looks right into your head and heart and knows why you come to church and why you do not go to Sunday school and church. He knows about every sin you are guilty of each day.

Two vital parts of the body are the head and the heart. When a lost person is "Born Again" he has a new heart transplant and puts on the helmet of salvation. To protect the heart he has the breastplate of righteousness and the shield of faith.

So you see, when Jesus x-rays people, He will tell you exactly what is needed. There is no guess work with Jesus. We have all the instructions in His word. He says on the prescription, "Do this and have eternal life" or just set it on the shelf and you will die and go to hell.

Notice some scripture concerning the heart: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" - Luke 6:45; "Where your treas ure is there will your heart be also" - Luke 12:34; "God...kno weth the secrets of the heart: - Psalm 44:21; "Create in me a clean heart oh God; and renew a right spirit within me" - Psalm 51:10; "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" Proverbs 4:23.

God has two dwellings, one is in heaven, and the other in a meek and thankful heart. Always keep this in mind, there is an all seeing eye always watching you.

Try this on for size: Live everyday as if it were your last. Do every job as if you were the boss. Drive as if all other vehicles were police cars. Treat everybody else as if he were you.

1979

VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory forever. Romans 11:36

This verse reminds me of a beautiful lake called "White Lake" in North Carolina. This is a very clear lake; so clear that it is easily possible to look into the translucent depths to where the submarine foliage waves! So deep, that the ordinary measuring line fails to plumb them. All these words are monosyllables. A child just learning to read could easily spell them out. But who shall exhaust their meaning?

OF HIM. The entire scheme of redemption; the marvelous history of the chosen people, with which this chapter is occupied; the universe of matter, all are included in all the things that have emanated out of God. No one has been his counselor, or given aught to Him, who is their fountain, source and origin; and in Him, let us learn to fill our own souls to the very brim.

THROUGH HIM. Through Jesus Christ, the Mediator, God has poured the entire grace and wealth of His nature to bless and help us. There is no good thing that does not come to us through the mediation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Through Him, He made the worlds. Through Him, we have received the reconcili ation. Through Him, also, all grace is made to abound toward us. Never forget to magnify the Lord Jesus as the source of all your supply.

TO HIM. Creation, Providence, Redemption, are all tending back to God. The tide is setting in towards the throne. A revenue of glory shall yet accrue from all that has happened within the parenthesis of time. Every whit in the great temple shall one day say "Glory!"

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him. Col. 1:1b.

1980

BREAD OF LIFE
FIRE-FIRE

You might say, "that's a hot subject." Yes, and if you were in a building filled with people and someone yelled, "Fire", there would be a stampede of people trying to get out because they know what fire will do.

I would like to just call your attention to some things mentioned in God's Word. Beyond its ordinary uses, fire was a symbol of God's presence. In Ex. 3:2, God appeared before Moses in the burning bush.

Do you recall in I Kings 18:38 where Elijah challenges Baal's prophets - "Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." Praise God! We have the same God today.

God revealed Himself to David by fire. I Chron. 21:26 - "And David built there an alter unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings and called upon the Lord; and He answered him from Heaven by fire upon the alter of burnt offerings." What about this? Proverbs 26:20-21 - "Where no wood is, the fire goeth out; so where there is no tale bearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife."

Do you remember the story in Daniel 3 where the three men would not worship a false God? So the king had them put in the furnace. The king looked in and saw a fourth man and he said, "He is like the Son of God." The king told them to come out and the fire had no power, nor the smell of fire had passed on them." Remember, we still have the same God.

God's messenger is to come with refining fire, Mal. 3:2 - "But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers soap."

Fruit or not fruit! John the Baptist preached this. Matt. 3:10 - "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees, therefore, every tree which bringeth forth not good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Jesus said this Himself in Matt. 7:19.

What about the end of time? In Matt. 13 we see where Jesus taught his disciples that the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the Kingdom and the tares are children of the wicked one. There shall be a separation and the tares shall be cast in the fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus said in John 15:6 - "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

Briefly summarizing the subject of fire:

1. A symbol of God's presence - Ex. 3:2

2. Christ revealed in this medium to sinners - 2 Thes. 1:8

3. Figuratively, it denotes a very thorough cleansing agent - John 6:6

4. The second destruction of the world will be by its means - 2 Peter 3:7

ASSURANCE

Does Jesus mean assurance to you as a Christian? Have you tested Christ? I feel like I have, in joy and sorrow, in success and failure, in health and sickness, in many ways of life I have trusted Christ and have found that He is able to carry both me and my burden and bring me safely to the other side. I read in II Tim. 1:12, I can say as Paul said. I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. Can you doubt the promises of God? God cannot lie.

I read in Deut. 33:27 where Moses had the assurance when he said, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." All those who have come to God through faith in Christ have found no matter how rough the going, "underneath are the everlasting arms." If you have not given your heart to the Savior's keeping you will not understand the great love of God through Christ. A love that goes with us in our daily lives.

What about this for assurance? I Cor. 2:9 - "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for they that love Him."

I read in Isaiah 41:10 where God told Isaiah, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." God will do the same thing to each of us who fully trust him.

Jesus Christ is the personification of all God's assurances. He is the rock of assurance, the rock of salvation, in whom all mankind can find safety and security. Christ says, "I am the door," if any man enter in he shall be saved.

Christian, why can't we take His word and really believe that He has assured us of His love, His care, His presence, His protection and take these and all others and walk and live by them each day.

LOOK UP TO JESUS

How sad it is that so many Christians have such little trust in God. God's word says to trust Him with all our heart. Life is too complicated, and therefore we need to take everything to God in prayer.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:6.

THY PATHS. Then every man's path is distinct for him, and for no other. The paths may lie side by side, but they are different. We need to be divinely directed. God who made thee for thy life, and thy life for thee, can direct thee, and He only.

First: Lean not to thine own understanding - one is apt to pride oneself on one's farsighted judgment. We consult our maps and guides and opinion of fellow travelers to find ourselves at fault. We have to learn that our own understanding is not keen enough to direct; we must adjure and renounce all dependence on it.

Second: In all thy ways acknowledge Him. Let thine eye be single; thy one aim to please Him; thy sole motive, His glory. It is marvelous how certainly and delightfully our way opens before us when we no longer look down on it, or around at others, but simply upwards into the face of Christ. "It is universal law, unalterable as the nature of God, that no created being can be truly holy, useful, or happy, who is knowingly and deliberately out of divine fellowship, for a single moment."

1980

HOUSE CLEANING

This is a familiar subject to some people. I remember when I was a boy we always had a real good spring house cleaning. This meant taking all the mattresses out to be sunned good. And the bed boards and springs were cleaned good. All the house was mopped real good. After all the house cleaning, the air would smell fresh and everything looked so good. Another thing about a clean house, people seem to get along better.

Have you ever seen a home that was such a disaster that you could hardly relax? Well I have and it wasn't a good feeling.

Now I want you to think about some spiritual things. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit has in a sense, made you His home. Do you not know that you are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you? (I Cor. 3:16).

What kind of living conditions have you created for the Spirit of God in your life? Have you welcomed Him? Have you removed those things that would grieve Him? "And grieve not the Holy spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30). When you decide to clean house, be sure to remove the things which cause the Spirit grief.

"Let all bitterness, and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice." (Ephesians 4:31).

After you have cleaned up good, it's time to do a little decorating with kindness, tenderness and forgiveness. (Ephesians 4:32).

Some would say "why go to all the trouble?" If you want an effective prayer life, you must, as Jude says, "pray in the Spirit." Does some habit short circuit your prayers? Clean up and put your house in order today.

1984

THE VINE

It is so wonderful to read in God's word where Jesus used the simple things to make us understand the very important things of life in this world.

I was examining my grape vine and was reminded of some of the things that Jesus taught concerning the vine. As you know, a grape vine has one main stem and has many branches that grow off the main stem. These branches depend entirely on the main stem for growth and bearing fruit.

I remind you of what Jesus said in John 15:4-5 - "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except you abide in Me. I am the vine and ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him,. the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.

The power to fight sin and the power to do right are gifts which Christ bestows on all believers, but we must belong to Christ before we can lay claim to that power.

If we, as Christians, are not a lively branch of the vine (Christ), there is no spiritual power or spiritual fruit. Remember, He said, "Without me you can do nothing."

I would like to call your attention to Apostle Paul. At first, he was a spiritual weakling but was transformed into one of the world's spiritual giants and he made no secrets of the source of his power. Phil. 4:13 says - "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." If we want spiritual strength it must come from Christ. In Gal. 3:20 Paul stated, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

In one place we read, "You shall know them by their fruits." Now let us examine ourselves and see if we are bearing fruits of the flesh or of the Spirit. Read Gal. 5:19-23 and you find that the fruits of the flesh are: adultery, fornication, uncleaness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings.

The fruits of the spirit are: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Now God will not accept fruits of the flesh but only fruits of the spirit. You know God only accepts spiritual worship.

If you notice the first thing mentioned in spiritual fruit is love. Jesus said, if you love me keep my commandments. Let me refer you to two verses, Mark 12:30-31. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment, and the second is like, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self. There is none other commandments greater than these."

I suggest you read Luke 10:29-37 and find out who your neighbor is. Are you a branch of the true and living Vine? Let us pray that we can bear the spiritual fruits that God will accept.

UNLIMITED BLESSINGS

The Lord promises unlimited blessings to them that walk uprightly. Those who walk in obedience experience His gracious care.

"For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Ps. 84:11.

How God suits Himself to our need! In darkness, He is a Sun; in the sultry noon, a Shield; in our pilgrimage He gives grace; when the morning of Heaven breaks, He will give glory. He suits Himself to every varying circumstance in life. He becomes what the exigency of the moment requires. And as the Psalmist well says, He withholds no good thing from them that walk uprightly. We must learn the art of extracting from God the special form of help of which we stand in need.

The Sun is the source of light and life. With impartial beneficence He scatters His beams on palace and cottage, mountains and valleys. He is ever pouring out His beams. It is our part only to stand in them, or to open casement or door. God is shining, dear heart. Get out of thyself, and sun thy shivering frame in His untiring love.

A Shield may be a shadow of a great rock in the scorching desert, or a canopy of a gourd's growth. Put God between yourself and the sirocco of temptation. Is the noon with its burning heat too much for you? Hide in the Lord God. The heat shall not smite you by day, nor the frost by night.

Do you need grace? He is full of it. His grace is sufficient. With both hands He will give and give again; only practice the habit of taking. Grace is the bud of which Glory is the flower. If He has given this, He will not withhold that. If you knew the gift of God, you would be sure that Glory in Him is within you, waiting only for the summer of Eternity to develop in perfect beauty. "We have had our access by faith into the grace wherein we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

1980

GIVING TO GOD

This is a subject that there are a lot of controversies about in churches and even with individuals. There are not many people that will take time to look up and read what God's word says about giving.

There are different ways in taking the offering in churches. Some pass the offering plate around, some put the offering in plates when they enter the building, and some take the offering up front and put it in containers. I asked some why do it like this. The main answer - it is a custom that has been passed down.

If you will read in the Old Testament, you will find that under the law people were required to give one tenth of money, live stock, etc. Look back to Genesis 28:22, Jacob made this state ment, "and this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Also read Lev. 27:32.

Some preachers use these scriptures: Mal. 3:8 - "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me, but you say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." Mal. 3:10 - "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, and there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of host, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

As we are now under grace, let us look at some New Testament teachings. I would especially like for you to read II Cor. 8 and 9.

Paul tells the church at Corinth of the generosity of the churches of Macedonia to the Palestine Famine Fund. Although poor themsel-

ves, they begged for an opportunity to give, and they gave liberally because first they gave themselves to the Lord. The fund was gathered from all the churches of Asia Minor and Greece. It had been started a year before Paul was in Macedonia when he wrote this. He had accepted no pay for his work from any of his churches except Philippi. Christ was the example for these early Christians. (II Cor. 8:9) the Lord knows if He gets us, He will get our gifts and our service.

Some of the ways we are taught to give:

1. Give out of your poverty - II Cor. 8:2
2. Give generously - II Cor. 8:3
3. Give willingly - II Cor. 9:7
4. Give proportionately - II Cor. 8:12-14
5. Give bountifully - II Cor. 9:6

God has ever promised to reward the generous giver. He enriches us with spiritual graces as well as material things. I Cor. 16:2 - "Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

Why give? To carry on God's work and spread the gospel that souls may be saved. This is the reason we give, "for God so loved the world that He gave His only begottten Son." God himself delights to give. Giving is between you and God and remember, certainly under grace we should go beyond the law.

Some thoughts for you to consider:

1. God has given us two hands, one to receive with and the other to give with. We are not cisterns made for hoarding; we are channels made for sharing.

2. There are three kinds of giving; grudge giving, duty giving and thanksgiving. grudge giving says, "I hate to"; duty giving says "I ought to", thanksgiving says, "I want to." The first comes from constraint, the second from a sense of obligation, the third from a full heart. Nothing much is conveyed in grudge giving, since the gift without the giver is bare. Something more happens in duty giving but there is no song in it. thanksgiving is an open gate into the love of God.

3. It is possible to give without loving - but it is impossible to love without giving.

1979

THE TWO-EDGED SWORD

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12.

You may remember the story about David killing the giant Goliath. No doubt this giant had a very sharp sword. I Sam. 21:9 - "There is none like it; give it; give it to em."

What David said of the sword of Goliath we may say of Holy scripture - the sword of the Spirit - "there is none like that."

There is no book like the Bible for those convinced of sin.

The Word of God assures the sinner of God's love in Christ, while it refuses to condone a single sin,or excuse one shortcoming. The Bible is as stern as conscience herself against sin, but as pitiful as the heart of God to the sinner. It moreover discloses the method by which the just God becomes the justifier of those who believe.

There is no book like the Bible for the sorrowful. It tells of the Comforter; it reminds us that in all our sorrow God also is sad; it points to the perfect plan according to which God is working out our blessedness; it insists that all things are working together for good; it opens the vision of the blessed future, where all the griefs and tears of all of us will be put away forever.

There is no book like the Bible for the dying. "Read to me" said sir Walter Scott on his dying bed, to his friend. "What shall I read?" "There is only one book for a dying man," was the answer; "read to me from the Bible." The book which tells of the Lord, who died and rose again; of the mansions which He has gone to prepare; of the reunion of the saints; of the fountains of the water of life - is the only pillar on which the dying head can rest softly.

In these last days we must let God's word guide our lives each day. Our best weapon against the evils of this world is God's word. Read, study, meditate and let God's word live through you daily.

1981

BREAD OF LIFE
WILL YOU ACCEPT HELP?

You hear a lot about the generation gap today. Is there a generation gap? Or is it a fact that there are a lot of children that their parents could help but they refuse help. Parents who know about the dangers and the perils and the pitfalls and the temptations, often have to say, "I can't help you, unless you let me."

Having taught school for 30 years, I would often have students who had very good capability and could have been a real good scholar, but the pupil would not accept advice, would not concentrate, would not study, would not apply himself. "I can't help you unless you let me."

Another application to this subject could be when you go to a doctor. The doctor knows if the patient is cured. Certain treatment must be given. This may even include an operation and certain things avoided. But the patient refuses all the prescribed things of the doctor - so finally the doctor says, "I can't help you unless you let me."

All these examples were given to come to this truth. That is what God must always be saying. It may be that the greatest mystery of all is the mystery of the freedom of the will. God does not force His will upon us or force His guidance upon us. God cannot compel us to accept His way, His love, His grace. So again and again God is saying to His self-willed children - "I cannot help you unless you let me."

Psalm 33:20 - "Our soul waiteth for the Lord, He is our help and our shield." Psalm 46:1 - "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 121:1-2 - "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth." Mark 9:24 - "And straightaway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Heb. 4:16 - "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Matt. 23:37 - As Jesus came to Jerusalem in the last week of his life, He looked down on the city and said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not."

The first necessity of Christianity is submission, and unless we make that submission, God is left saying - "I cannot help you, unless you let me."

August 1976

FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S ELECT

"Paul a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." Titus 1:1.

These seem to have been the two guiding stars of the apostle's life - faith and knowledge. Some are afraid of the conjunction. The men of faith are afraid of science, and the men of science often despise faith. But they are not antagonistic.

FAITH - The faith that inspires all elect souls is one and the same. In some there may be more, in others less, but its attitude toward God and its phases of experience, trial, and triumph, are the same in all who believe. In addition to this, the general facts and truths on which our faith lays hold, and from which it extracts its nourishment, are the same: and it is a comfort to know that these have been passed on from age to age from the earliest days, and that we are called to believe in them, and hold them fast.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH - We need not fear or shun knowledge, which is simply the exploring and discovery of the ways and thoughts of God. "Let knowledge grow from more to more." Only let her always concern herself with the great facts and methods of God's universe, rather than with human speculation and fancy. There is a distinction between knowledge and wisdom. The one may be only intellectual: the other is always moral. those who pretend to know are not always wise: but the wise always know.

GODLINESS - True knowledge will make you Godly, reverent, devout; filling you with the spirit of God within, and with likeness to God without. It is only as you are Godly, that you will really be wise and know things that are hidden from the wise and prudent. True knowledge leads to Godliness and Godliness back to knowledge.

1980

SECURITY

A lot of people today place their security in insurance policies, a big bank account, maybe a business, or owner of a lot of land or property. I guess it's okay to have these but the only real security we have is in Jesus Christ. Psalm 23:1 - "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." People have a tendency to worry about food, clothing, and many other everyday common things. God tells us in Matt. 6:31-34 not to worry about these things but to first seek the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness and then we will get the things we need.

Psalm 27:1 - "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Doesn't this make you feel more secure as a Christian?

Psalm 121:8 - In this verse we see complete security. "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore." In John 10:11, Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." So you see, when a person accepts Jesus by faith as their Savior, then you have full security for eternal life.

If you are a child of God, this should make you feel more secure. Phil. 4:19 - "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

HOW TO BE SAVED

This is something every Christian should be able to tell a lost person.

If I were to ask you how a sinner can be accepted before God, what would your answer be? The way of salvation is clearly spelled out in these verses: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5) "Who hath saves us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace" (Tim. 1:9). "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God - not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph 2:8-9).

From these passages it is evident that works have no part in obtaining salvation. Works of charity, works of morality, works in the church - whatever we might do to commend ourselves to God are swept away. Isaiah 64:6 says, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags." We certainly can't expect to bribe the Lord with a lot of dirty rags!

Our only hope is to look to Jesus, who took our place and removed our guilt. He came into the world, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26). "Who His own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree" (I Peter 2:24). Divine justice demanded death. God has met this requirement in the death of His son. Paul said, "He hath made him....to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (II Cor. 5:21).

The Jews asked Jesus, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God, that you believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John

6:28-29). Believing is not doing; it is resting upon what has already been done. It is accepting God's testimony as true, and it is trusting Him who is faithful.

May God help you to see that all the doing is done, and that whosoever "believeth" hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

DON'T FEAR THE FIRE OF LIFE

You recall the story in Daniel about the three Jews who would not fall down and worship the false God. Read Daniel 3 - The king said, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" - Daniel 3:25.

There was no doubt about their being bound. Their turbans, man tles, and other garments had bound their limbs so tightly that when first they reached the furnace they fell down bound in the midst. Whatever else the fire could not do, it at least freed them, so that they walked loose; and the dewy glades of Paradise were not more fragrant and delightful than were those white-hot cinders.

This is what trial has often done for us. We have become conscious of the binding effect of our own habits which we had permitted as comparatively innocent; but gradually the conviction grew that they be laid aside. Yet they clung to us until some fiery trial befell us, and from that hour, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, we were free. Do not fear the fire. It cannot hurt one hair of your head, or leave the smell of burning on you; but it will eat out the alloy, and gnaw away the iron bands that bound you.

But Jesus never allows his beloved to walk the fire alone. If it is heated seven times hotter than its wont, this is only the reason for his becoming more real, as our living and glorious Friend. There always goes beside the tried saint, though not always patent even to the eye of the Spirit, another whose aspect is that of the Son of God. Reach out thy hands to Him beloved - He is there. The Refiner not only watches the crucible, He is in it with thee. In all thy afflictions, He is afflicted.

1980

TAKE YOUR CHOICE

Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus speaks about life's journey in this world. He says one choice is to select the broad road. This way is easy because you just go along with the crowd. Jesus says this way leads to destruction and many are on that way. In other words, if you want to wind up in Hell follow the broad way.

Jesus says there is another way to travel and this is the narrow way. He didn't say this was an easy road to travel but He did say this way leads to eternal life and only a few are on this way. Take your choice. Jeremiah 21:8 in God's word says - "Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death." Take your choice of eternal life or death.

Do you want to know the right way? I Samuel 12:23 in God's word says - "I will teach you the good and the right way." In John 14:6 Jesus says "I am the way, the truth, the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

We live in a time that is so wicked, man wants to do as he pleases and do his thing so to speak. Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way that seemeth right to man but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Before every man there lies a wide and pleasant road that seems right but ends in death.

We must take God's word, and believe it. Heaven can only be entered through the narrow gate. The road to hell is broad and the gate is wide enough for all the multitudes who choose its easy way.

Did you ever hear of the Heavenly Highway? Isaiah 35:8 - "And it shall be called the way of holiness, the unclean shall not pass over it." Oh! How important it is that people know the Lord and choose the right way for our lives.

Jesus said in John 14:2 - "There are many mansions up there where my Father lives and I'm going to prepare them for your coming."

Make the right choice today!

October 1978

PREPARE TO MEET GOD

Amos feared God so much that he feared no one else. Amos proclaimed a message so far ahead of his time that most of the human race, and a large part of Christendom have no yet caught up with it.

Such courage was no more heeded in Israel's time than in ours today. There is one scripture we will consider: "Amos 4:12,

Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." This is the message that our great country must hear today.

These words might have rung out in Paradise. When the heat of the day was over, the voice of the Lord might have been heard sound ing down the leafy avenues; "Prepare O man, to meet thy God!" And the summons must have been filled with ecstasy. As a child to its parent, so must those two innocent and happy beings have sped to their Creator. We, too, hear the summons. Each morning when we stand ready for the duties of the day, we hear the voice, "Prepare to meet me." Each Lord's Day we wake with the same summons in our heart, and prepare ourselves to meet our God. Each illness, each fluttering of the canvas of our mortality, each premonition of our end, takes up the same appeal, "Prepare to meet God." And as we hear the words, we have no dread, no fear. Clothed in Christ's perfect righteousness, arrayed in His beauty, we know that we are accepted; that the love wherewith the Father loves the Son is waiting to greet us.

But there should be a preparedness of heart. We should not rush heedlessly into His presence. We should stimulate our hearts by thoughts like those suggested in the following verse: "Stop and remember how great God is; He formed the mountains." How subtle His power; He made the viewless wind, and the Spirit which it is the emblem. How omniscient His knowledge; He can declare unto man's inmost thought. How absolute His authority; the brightest morning will darken, or the darkest night brighten, as He bids. How vast the circuit of His providence who steps from Alpine peak to peak. Let me not rush into His presence; He is my Father. But He is the Lord, the God of Host; I must order my thoughts and "Prepare To Meet Him."

1980

ABIDE IN MY WORD

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, "If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31-32.

1. <u>We shall be approved as Christ's Disciples.</u> "Then are you truly my disciples." Of some the Master asks, "Why call Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" And He drives these from Him, saying "I never knew you." His words are the supreme test - the fire which detects the ore; the winnowing-fan that finds out the wheat. Our

treatment of our Lord's words discriminates us: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, is he that loveth me.

2. We shall know the truth. God teaches us differently from men. They deal in per adventures and surmises; He with certainties - "Ye shall know the truth." They talk about the truth; He gives us the thing itself, and we know because we possess. They deal with circumstances and externals; He with the heart and root of matters. They give to the mind and soul; He to the Spirit. We know the Truth, because the Truth is in us. "We know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding, that we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true.

3. We shall be free. "The truth shall make you free." Just as we are free from the terrors which believe in witchcraft and ghosts was wont to breed, because we know that the Spirits of the dead do not haunt dark and dangerous places; just as we no longer fear the fatuous light over the marsh, or the death-tick, because science has attributed these to natural causes; so, as Jesus teaches us the truth about God, and the future, and the forgiveness of sins, and the broken power of Satan, and the importance of death, we are delivered from the bondage of fear and walk with God in perfect peace.

1980

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT AND SOMETHING TO LIVE BY

Let us take a look at ourselves and see how we measure up. Remember the story of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:13-21? This is a warning to us. Where did he go wrong?

First, he remembered the wrong things.

1. He remembered himself. It has been said that Jesus came to banish the words "I" and "mine" from life and substitute "we" and "ours". It is certainly significant that in the Lord's Prayer the first person plural never occurs - the first person singular is always used instead. Self is banished and man is taught to think of himself as one of a community of brethren.

2. He remembered this world. There is an unwritten saying of Jesus - "This world is a bridge. The wise men will pass over it but will not build his house upon it." He meant that the world is not of first rate importance, but that it is a stage to another world and he who forgets that has really forgotten the main object of life

Second, he forgot the essential things.

1. He forgot his neighbors. One of the greatest tests of man is the finding of his enjoyment. Does he connect enjoyment entirely with himself or does he connect enjoyment in making other people happy? If he seeks only selfish enjoyment, he will never find it. However, if he tries to bring sunshine into the lives of others, he will bring it into his own life.

2. He forgot time. It may be said that the most dangerous word in the English language is "tomorrow". It may be a grim thought, but it is necessary to remember that we have no bond on time. No one is really sure when his tomorrow will come.

3. He forgot God. Read James 4:13-15. The man who makes plans and leaves God out has left out the most important factor of all.

4. He forgot that man is what he is and not what he has Should our main thought be on the things we will leave behind us or the things we will take with us when we leave this world? As the Spanish proverb grimly puts it, "There are no pockets in a shroud." Or you may have heard this saying: "Sow a deed, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny."

Now read Matthew 25:31-46. Jesus' principle is summed up in the following sentence - "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." Therefore if we want to do something for God, it is necessary that we do things for our fellow man.

GOD UNDERSTANDS

"Great is our Lord and of great power; His understanding is infinite. Psalm 147:5.

People long to be understood. They need someone who realizes what makes them tick - what they enjoy, what they dislike, what they need. That's why the cry, "no one understands me" is so sad. People who voice that feeling think that nobody can comprehend what is going on inside them. But no one ever needs to feel that way. Every one can find comfort in the joyous truth that God knows all about us. Psalm 103:14, and that His understanding is infinite. He can help when no one else can, because He created us and knows us thoroughly.

In the early days of the automobile, a man who was driving a Model T. Ford had engine trouble. He couldn't get his car started no matter

how hard he turned the crank. He tried everything he knew to do but it still wouldn't run. Just then a chauffeured limousine pulled up. A wiry, energetic man stepped out from the back seat and offered his assistance. After tinkering under the hood for a few moments, the stranger said "now try it." Immedi ately, the engine leaped to life. The well dressed individual identified himself. "I'm Henry Ford" he said. I designed and built these cars, so I know what to do when something goes wrong with them.

In the same way, God understands us from A to Z. He created us, so he knows exactly how we feel. We can confidently turn to Him in our hours of perplexity and frustration. He recognizes the difficulty of our situation, and He has the answers to all problems. Yes, God understands.

God does more than hear words. He reads hearts.

September 1983

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST

More than nineteen hundred years ago there was a man born con trary to the laws of life. This man lived in poverty and was reared in obscurity. He received no formal education and never possessed wealth or widespread influence. He never traveled extensively. He only once crossed the boundary in which he lived.

But this man's life has changed the course of history. He startled a King in childhood. In childhood he puzzled doctors, in manhood he ruled the course of nature, walked upon the waves and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services. He never wrote a book. Yet His life has inspired more books than any other man. He never wrote a song, yet he has furnished the theme for more songs than all the song writers combined.

He never founded a college, but schools put together cannot boast as having as many students. He never marshaled an army nor drafted a soldier, nor fired a gun, yet no leader ever had more rebels surrender to Him without a shot fired.

He never practiced psychiatry, yet he has healed more broken hearts than all doctors far and near. The names of great statesmen have come and gone, scientists, philosophers, and theologians are soon forgotten, but the name of this man abounds more and more. Once

each week the wheels of commerce cease their turning and multitudes gather to pay homage and respect to Him. Though time has spread nineteen hundred years between the people of this generation and His birth, He still lives. His enemies could not destroy Him and the grave could not hold Him.

This man stands forth upon the highest pinnacle of heavenly glory, proclaimed of God, acknowledged by angels, adored by His people, and feared by devils, as the risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

God also hath highly exalted Him (Jesus Christ), and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God the Father.

If thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. If you are not saved please don't put it off too long. If you need help, call me. Jesus is the answer.

BELIEVE IN ME

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me." John 14:1

Were we less familiar with these words, we should be more star tled by their immeasurable meaning. One who seems a man, ask all men to give Him precisely the same faith and confidence that they give to God. He would not abate His claims, though He was the humblest and meekest of men. And the irresistible conclusion is forced on us, that He was and knew Himself to be, "God, manifest in the flesh."

1. Faith in Jesus is the cure of heart trouble. It is of little use to say, "Let not your heart be troubled", unless you can add, "Trust Christ." Only if we can trust can we be still. Only if we can shift the responsibility of our life on the care of our never failing Redeemer can weeping be exchanged for radiant and un speakable joy.

2. Faith in Jesus conducts to the knowledge of God. "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me." Phillip said, "Show us the Father." Jesus answered, "Believe, and thou doest behold." The world says, seeing is believing: Jesus says, Believing is seeing. The true way to know God is, not by arguing about or seeking to verify His existence by intellectual processes, but by obeying the precepts of Jesus; following the footsteps of Jesus; holding fellowship with Jesus.

3. Faith in Jesus will make our lives the channel through which He can work. "He that believeth on Me, the works," etc., John 14:12-14. The Gospels are included in the one clause; the Acts and all the marvels of the following ages in the other. Jesus is always the worker; and the man that yields himself most utterly to Him in obedience and faith, will become the channel through which He will work most mightily.

"I CAN" OR "I CAN'T"

You probably remember the story of the little "Choo-choo train." The engine was pulling a heavy load up this steep hill and kept repeating "I think I can", "I think I can." After much hard pulling the engine finally made it. When the engine started down the hill it repeated, "I thought I could", "I thought I could."

This reminds me of when I had a stroke in June 1971. I was completely paralyzed on all my left side. I lay in the hospital for two months wondering if I would ever walk again. I knew God was the source of all strength, so I prayed to God that He would give me the strength to walk again. The therapist started me off between parallel bars. I worked hard and kept saying, "I can, I can." The therapist then started trying to teach me to walk with a cane. It was hard because I had to concentrate on making my left foot move out for each step. I kept saying to myself, "I can, I can."

God's word says in Phil 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

God's work in this world is to be carried on by Christian people. Why is it so hard to get some people involved in church work? There are two types of people in the church, the "I can" and the "I can't" people.

When we are living the "I can" life of spiritual victory, our whole nature benefits. And the secret of the "I can" life lies in the two words, "through Christ".

The true Christian position is to accept that which God appoints, and to say, "I can do all things through Christ." All of us who know and love the Savior long to "do" something for Him.

Do you recall the humble followers in God's word that became spiritual giants, "through Christ." Just to mention a few: Moses, David, Daniel, Paul.

The one vital condition is that we guard against anything which interrupts our fellowship with Christ. The moment we lose contact, the

spiritual electricity ceases to course through us. We become dead wires. The great thing is to "Keep the contact", so that the life current may flow through us continually. We make the contact by yielding ourselves completely to Him. We keep the contact by daily living in communion with Him.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Here is true enablement for burden-bearing. The text may just as well be translated, I can bear all things.

Now I can imagine someone saying, "I want to live the 'I can' life, but my perplexity is to know how this thing works." Well this is how: I can do all things through Christ, when I allow Him to do all things through me.

So, will you say "Yes, I can through Christ?"

October 1976

WORSHIP

Do you really worship God when you assemble in a building that is called a church? People may worship false gods just as they did in olden times. First, only born again people can truly worship God.

Jesus said in John 4:23-24 - "The hour cometh, and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and truth."

Ask any Christian, what is worship, and you will get different answers. Some may describe it like this, (1) "to bow down or prostrate oneself." (2) "Worship is the adoring contemplation of God as He has revealed Himself in Christ and in the scriptures. It is the act of paying honor and reverence to God." (3) "Worship is the loving ascription of praise to God for what He is, both in Himself and in His ways. It is the bowing of the inner most spirit in deep humility and reverence before Him."

Worship flows from love, and where there is little love there will be little worship. But, there can be an element of selfishness even in love. We can and should worship God in gratitude for what He has done for us. It reaches a higher level when we worship Him simply for what He is, for the perfections and excellences of His own being.

Some people may make various motions in their worship. Some make various sounds. Some people have a certain ritual they will go

through each time they come together. Worship can be wordless (Psalm 62:5). Many places in Psalms will help us in our worship. An example is Psalm 95.6) - "O come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker."

We can't have true worship if we have unconfessed sin in our life. We should get all this cleared up before we go to church. We should always remember this, that our body is the temple where the Holy Spirit dwells. We should keep it cleaned up and presentable each day.

Not all of us find it easy to express our deepest feelings or to utter the love of our hearts to God. We are very conscious of the poverty of our thoughts of God and the inadequacy of the words in which we express them. This is where good spiritual hymns help out.

We should guard against the idea that worship is confined to the realm of thought, for scripture links worship with service. During the temptation in the wilderness, our Lord quoted the Old Testament. You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only" - Matt. 4:10. We should not separate what God has joined. Worship is no substitute for service, nor is service a substitute for worship. True worship will inevitably find expression in loving, sacrificial service.

Each time you go to church remember what Jesus said in Matt. 18:20 - "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Worship renews the spirit as sleep renews the body.

Finally, what greater calamity can fall upon a nation than a loss of worship.

May 1979

"I AM"

You may say, "I'm a Christian." What does it mean? That you joined a church, that you are a pretty good fellow, that you attend church and tithe? NO, none of these qualify you to become a Christian. When you realized you were a sinner and headed for Hell and found out the only way to change this was to confess to Jesus and ask forgiveness and accept Jesus as your Savior, then you became a Christian. Be sure you know that you are born into God's family.

The Bible has more to say about how to live the Christian life than it has to say about how to become a Christian. God knew we would have a lot of difficulty on this earth, and He wanted to give us all the help we would need so we could live in a way that would please Him.

We have the same God that talked to Moses. Exodus 3:14 - And God said to Moses, "I Am that I Am"; and he said thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, "I Am" hath sent me unto you.

Now let us look in the book of John and see some statements Jesus made. Jesus said:

1. John 6:35 - I Am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; He that believeth on Me shall never thirst.

2. John 8:12 - I Am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness; but shall have the light of life.

3. John 8:58 - I Am before Abraham was.

4. John 10:9 - I Am the door, by Me if any man shall enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

5. John 10:11 - I Am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.

6. John 11:25 - I Am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

7. John 14:6 - I Am the way, the truth, and the life, no one cometh to the Father but by Me.

8. John 15:1 - I Am the the vine and my Father is the husbandman.

9. John 15:5 - I Am the vine, you are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing.

Jesus wanted men to know the Father as He knew Him. Remember, Christ was with the Father from the beginning.

One thing for sure, we are nothing without Christ. If there is any thing good about you, it is only because the Holy Spirit lives within you.

Can you truly say, "I'm a born again child of God?"

October 1976

WELL ESTABLISHED

If you are a child of God and someone asked you "Are you a sound, well-established Christian?" how would answer?

After that last bad hurricane we had, I notice some trees right along the coast that stood the test and were still standing. They were rooted and grounded and well established.

As I think about the storms of life, there are so many Christians who are so weakly established that they are tossed about and have no direction in life. Satan delights in dealing with these shal low rooted Christians. Hebrews 13:9 - "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace."

Remember where you were before you were saved. Psalm 40:2 - "He brought em up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." Proverbs 4:26 - "Ponder the path of thy feet and let all thy ways be established."

Truth or lies? Proverbs 12:19 - "The lip of truth shall be estab lished forever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment."

You cannot be well established if you are ignorant of God's righteousness. Romans 10:3 - "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."

Okay now Christian, remember this, Col. 2:6-7 - "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him; rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding there in with thanksgiving." What about this promise? II Thes. 3:3 - "But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil."

If God's people will study God's word and pray and meditate on His word day and night, they shall be like Psalm 1:3 - "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf shall not wither; and what soever he doeth shall prosper."

Well established and sound, and shall not be moved.

October 1976

FOLLY OR WISDOM?

We as human beings, are faced with actions and decisions each day. There are situations and opportunities we find ourselves in. Now we either use worldly wisdom (folly) or Godly wisdom in solving these things. Here is what God says about worldly wisdom. I Co. 3:19 "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness."

As Christians, we need to understand something about wisdom. What is wisdom? Wisdom is knowledge of God, and of God's ways as deduced from nature.

1. Folly or worldly wisdom produces bitter envying and strife in your heart, confusion and evil work. You will be the type person that out of your mouth will proceed blessing and cursing.

2. Wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

How do we obtain wisdom? How did Solomon get wisdom? It was a gift from God. I Kings 4:29-30, Proverbs 9:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy God is understanding."

Get clear about the will of God. If God's words can be discounted, then you may not be foolish to try to escape their implications; but if God is an unchanging God with an unchanging will, then be wise, act now, redeem the time.

Now make your choice - folly or God's wisdom?

June 1977

BELIEVING AND FAITH

A person who says "I believe in God" and doesn't do anything about it is still lost. Just as a person who says "I believe in food" and never eats would surely starve to death.

Not all who sound religious are really godly people. Matthew 7:21 says, "Not everyone that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven."

We are saved by God's grace through our faith. We have to have live, working faith. James 2:26 says "For as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Our believing and faith in Christ must make us seek to live a clear and Holy life. Hebrews 12:14 says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

You need more than just faith. You need a working faith so you can know God better and learn what He wants you to do in this world. You must put aside your own desires so you will become patient and godly, letting God have His way with you. This will cause you to love other people and enjoy them. In II Peter 1:5-10 Christians are told to add some things to their lives: 1. Add to your faith, virtue, 2. knowledge, 3. temperance, 4. patience, 5. godliness, 6. brotherly kindness, 7. love.

If you possess these things, the more you will grow spiritually and become fruitful and useful to our Lord Jesus Christ. But anyone who fails to go after these additions to faith is blind indeed,or at least very short sighted and has forgotten that God delivered him from the old life of sin so that now he can live a strong, good life for the Lord.

Ephesians 2:9 says, "Not of works lest any man should boast." So you see, salvation is not a reward for the good we have done, so none of us can take any credit for it.

April 1980

WHO AM I?

As I visited the Mississippi Methodist Rehabilitation center for treatment for this stroke, I couldn't help but notice and listen to patients in the hospital. Some definitely seem to have this question in their mind. Who am I that I have to suffer like this?

Go to God's word and He will give your identity. We have no promise that this life in this world will be an easy life. Job 14:1-2 says, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not."

Every individual is important to God. Keep this in mind; there is no other person just like you in the whole world. Man is more precious in the sight of God than the angels. God never deceives; but man is deceived whenever he puts too much trust in himself. Man proposes but God disposes.

Man has been placed in the world in order that he may develop and expand his talents and capacities to their fullest extent. If he is to do so, he needs four things; knowledge, art, technical skill, morality and religion. For truth must be known, beauty fashioned, good practiced and God feared and loved.

You are identified as a person with Christ in your heart or a person without Christ. A man without God is not like a cake without raisins; he is like the cake without the flour and milk, he lacks the essential ingredients of happiness.

Nature gives man corn but he must grind it; God gives man a will, but he must make the right choices.

We must remember this, we will not take these old frail bodies into heaven. II Corinthians 4:16-17 says, "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light afflictions, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

You remember this: You are you and God loves YOU!

October 1978

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO RESPECT?

Some things remain good no matter how long this world stands. It seems there are not many children today that are taught respect. It's a shame but a lot of children have to be taught respect by some of our good teachers at school.

I still well remember some of the things I was taught when I was growing up. Respect for parents, respect for God, respect for God's house, respect for God's ministers, respect for older people, respect for ladies, respect for our President, respect for our flag, respect for our country, respect for other peoples property; these are some of the things I was taught.

I want to call your attention to one thing; respect for older people. Leviticus 20:32 says - "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God; I am the Lord."

So parents, if you teach your children respect when they are young they will remember this when they grow up. Follow God's word!

November 1978

THE GREAT TEACHER

I can recall some good teachers in my school years. Can you? After teaching for 31 years, I hope some of my students considered me a good teacher.

I was reading Psalm 32 and the Great Teacher was brought to my attention. Psalm 32:8 - "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye."

"Learn of Me," said the Master. And indeed there is no teacher like Him; no school like His. We stand at the door of the school-house, saying "What I know not, teach thou me;" and He does not hesitate to undertake our case. But there are several points of difference from our methods. In Christ's school, there is but one Master for all the scholars and they all learn from the same books; the pupils begin with the upper classes and end with the lowest; and those that are most proficient, and have been longest under His tuition, are most conscious of their ignorance. There are no holidays; but every day is a holy day.

The school never breaks up; but the students leave for home and the prizes are sent after them and given when they arrive.

We need more than personal instruction; we are traveling through an unknown land, and require direction for the way. This also is guaranteed; but not in the cases of tourists, who extract all information from their friends before they start from home, as to the places they are about to visit. Our Guide accompanies us. He counsels us with His eye upon us, detecting every pitfall and chasm, warning us; perhaps even guiding us by the movement of His eye.

How greatly then are we in heed of the quickened sense! The eye fixed on His eye; the ear open to His slightest whisper; the foot quick to place itself down in His footprints. The horse and mule need bit and bridle; but it is enough for us if the heart fears to miss the lese indication of the Master's will. Be willing to know; it then becomes His part to make thee know somehow, if not in one way, then in another.

Obey the Great teacher (Jesus our Lord) and we will never go wrong.

1980

READY TO FORGIVE

"For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." Psalm 81:5.

We are blinded by sin, and cannot believe that God is ready to forgive. We think that we must induce Him to forgive, by tears, promises of amendment, religious observances. There is in every heart such difficulty in understanding the unwearying patience and ever-yearning love of our Heavenly Father. Oh, clasp this word in your heart! Say it over and over again - "Ready to forgive, ready to forgive." At any moment of the sad history of the prodigal, had he returned, he would have found his old father as ready to forgive as on the day, too long delayed, when he did return. The only pity was that he had not come long before.

You have fallen a hundred times and are ashamed to come to God again. It seems too much to expect that He will receive you again. But He will, for He is ready to forgive. You feel that your sin is aggravated, because you knew so much better; but it makes no difference to Him, He is as ready to forgive you now, as when first you came. You are disposed to wait a little till you sin has become more remote, till passion has subsided, till the inscription has faded from the wall; but you might as well go at once, God is as ready to forgive at this moment as at any future time. You are wounding Him greatly by doubting Him. He is ready, waiting, eager to forgive. You have only to call upon Him, and you would discover the plenteousness of His mercy. Don't put off too long; He is ready to forgive today.

1980

TAKE YOUR CHOICE

Matthew 7:13-14 - Jesus speaks about life's journey in this world. He says one choice is to select the broad road. This way is easy because you just go along with the crowd. Jesus says this way leads to destruction and many are on that way. In other words if you want to wind up in hell follow the broad way.

Jesus says there is another way to travel and this is the narrow way. He didn't say this was an easy road to travel but He did say this way leads to eternal life and only a few are on this way. Take your choice. Jeremiah 21:8 in God's word says,

Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death." Take your choice of eternal life or death.

Do you want to know the right way? I Samuel 12:23 in God's word says "I will teach you the good and the right way." John 14:6 - Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

We live in a time that is so wicked, man wants to do as he pleases and do his thing so to speak. Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way that seemeth right to man but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Before every man there lies a wide and pleasant road that seems right but ends in death.

We must take God's word, and believe it. Heaven can only be entered through the Narrow gate. The road to hell is broad and the gate is wide enough for all the multitudes who choose its easy way.

Did you ever hear of the Holy Highway? Isaiah 35:8 - "And it shall be called the way of holiness, the unclean shall not pass over it." Oh! How important it is that people know the Lord and choose the right way for our lives.

Jesus said in John 14:2, - "There are many mansions up there where my Father lives and I'm going to prepare them for your coming."

Make the right choice today!

October 1978

REAL LIFE AND REAL LIVING

What is life? Jesus said in Luke 12:14 - "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." A person may own a large amount of worldly things and have no experience of real life and real living. It is better to have little and be godly than to own an evil man's wealth. Psalm 37:16 says "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." Most people are worrying night and day trying to accumulate more and more worldly goods. Proverbs 15:16 says "Better is little with the fear of the Lord and great treasure and trouble therewith."

Do you want to be truly rich? You already are if you are happy and have Jesus in your heart. I Timothy 6:6-8 - "But Godliness with contentment is great gain, and having food and raiment let us be therewith content." We shouldn't complain if we have enough to eat and enough to wear. God knows if we have too much we will have less faith and forget Him. Proverbs 30:8-9 - "Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, "who is the Lord" or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." Seeding material possessions to gain life in the sure way to miss real life.

We are to live one day at a time. Jesus said in teaching about prayer - "Give us this day our daily bread." Jesus said for us not to worry about food, clothing, drink. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment.

If you want to experience real life and real living, take God at his word and live each day completely by faith. Hebrews 13:5 says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee not forsake thee."

October 1978

EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteousness man availeth much." James 5:16

It might be rendered literally: "Very strong is the supplication of a righteous man, energizing" when a man is right with God, not regarding iniquity in his heart, nor seeking aught for his own pleasure, the energy of the divine Spirit moves mightily within him, and his prayer become very strong. They recall the Master's with their strong cryings and tears.

The righteous man finds relief for suffering in prayer. "Is any among you suffering? Let him pray." There are sorrows we cannot tell to our dearest. Surges of grief sweep over us for which we have no words. Life is a stern fight for us all; and each heart knows its own bitterness. But there is always one resort: we can pour out our sorrows into the ear of our compassionate and merciful High Priest.

The righteous man prays the prayer of faith. The prayer of faith is that which is so sure of the divine answer that it knows that it has received it, though there is no appearance of its having been granted to the sense. We can only pray that prayer when we have asked what is in God's will to bestow. But righteous men cannot always pray thus, because they do not know the Lord's will on matters not recorded in this book. There are some sicknesses which are unto death, and we cannot pray the prayer of faith for these.

The righteous man can affect the whole history of his fatherland by his prayers. We have several examples in the Bible. I will only mention one and that is Elijah - think what would happen today if it didn't rain any in three years. Read I Kings 17. Oh, how we need more righteous men today to pray that God's people would repent and return to Him, so He would spare nation.

1980

SPIRITUAL HEALING

In studying "The Disciple's Personality" in the Masterlife class, the following thoughts come to me.

First consider this list: Heart Disease, Stroke, Cancer, Cirrhosis, Glaucoma, Cataracts, Acne, Migraines, Ulcers, Asthma, Diabetes, Kidney Disease, Bronchitis, Arthritis, High Blood Pressure, Deafness, Blindness. These ailments represent immeasurable and inexpressible suffering. They often take so much energy that little is left for anything else. They are the kind of pain that reached the heart of the Lord when he was here on earth. He took physical maladies seriously. He showed that they were matters of concern because He responded to them. He healed the sick. He made the deaf to hear and the blind to see. By his power and because of His compassion, He made the lame to walk again. Yes, Christ healed physical afflictions when He walked with men.

But how do problems of the body compare to problems of the mind and spirit? Do they have more potential for pain and suffering than the following list? Pride, Bitterness, Anger, Greed, Insensitivity, Deceitfulness, Laziness, Selfishness, Impatience, Willfulness, Gossip, Cruelty, Unfaithfulness, Sensuality, Apathy, Self-indulgence, Hypocrisy, Heartlessness, Envy, Materialism, Ignorance. Which list keeps a person from knowing the wisdom, goodness, power and love of God?

Then why do we spend so much time praying about physical problems? Why do the majority of current Sunday and Wednesday prayers treat the first list without showing any concern for the second?

Judge for yourself. If Paul prayed over and over for the spiritual well-being of his brothers and sisters, if in the Spirit and example of Christ he prayed that the church would grow in the faith and love and power and wisdom and Unity of God, then how can we justify an emphasis on broken bodies while we ignore the most important issues?

1983

AN INFALLIBLE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

II Timothy 3:16-17 - "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The Bible plainly teaches that its words are inspired and that it is the word of God. Let us examine this matter a little by considering briefly three kinds of evidence. First, direct testimony; second, inferential testimony; third, resultant testimony.

First, let us list some scriptures that show the direct testimony of the Bible in the fact of verbal inspiration. "And Moses said unto the Lord, 'Oh my Lord, I am not eloquent (a man of words), neither heretofore nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.' And the Lord said unto him, who hath made man's mouth? Now what thou shalt say. Exodus 4:10-12.

And the Lord said unto Moses, write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. (Exodus 34:27). Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it. (Deut. 4:2)

Some other examples of scriptures: Numbers 12:6-8, Deut. 18:20, Isaiah 1:10, Jeremiah 1:6-9.

All through the Old Testament you will see expressions as: "Thus saith the Lord", "The Lord said", "the Lord spake", "The Lord hath spoken", "The saying of the Lord", and "the word of the Lord", "The word of the Lord came unto me", and "the word of the living God".

Daniel said, "And when I heard the voice of his words." Daniel 10:9

"The word of the Lord came unto Jonah." Jonah 1:1

Some scriptures in the New Testament: John 12:49-50, 17:8, John 5:19, Mark 13:11. Paul says "which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." I Cor. 2:13.

And so the Bible uniformly teaches the doctrine of verbal inspiration. It is the Word of God.

Second, what of the inferential testimony to the fact of verbal inspiration? I mean by inferential testimony that which is assumed by the Bible and the natural implication belonging to many of its statements.

The Bible assumes to be from God in that it meets man face to face with drawn sword and says, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not,", and demands immediate, unconditional and irreversible surrender to the authority of Heaven, and submission to all the laws and will of God as made known in its pages.

A great many statements of the Bible plainly indicate that the words are inspired. The following are a few instances: "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in Heaven" (Psalm 119:89). This is characteristic of the entire Psalm. "The words of the Lord are pure words." Psalm 12:6

"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jer. 23:29. "The word of our God shall stand forever." Isaiah 40:8. Everywhere in the Sacred Record you find this same suggestion of divine authorship. Jesus and the apostles always recognized it and gave it prominence and emphasis. Its importance and value should not be under estimated.

Third, The resultant testimony. What of it? Paul tells us that "every sacred writing" is God breathed." "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." II Peter 1:21.

It is said; the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (Gen. 2:7). Elihu said, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the almighty hath given me life." (Job 33:4).

Now then, the very same almighty power that gave life to Adam and Elihu, and which made the heavens and all the host of them is in some mysterious sense, in the words of the Sacred Record. Therefore are we told; "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4:12.

What results will follow believing the word and submission to its requirements?

1. It will impart spiritual life and save the soul. James 1:21, I Peter 1:23, James 1:18, John 6:63, II Peter 1:4, II Cor. 5:17.

2. It has cleansing power. Psalm 119:9, John 15:3, Ephesians 5:26.

3. By the word we are kept from evil and the power of the evil one. Psalm 17:4, Psalm 119:17, John 17:14-17, Isaiah 40:6-8, II Cor. 13:8.

March 1979

PRAISE GOD!
A PERFECTED BODY ONE DAY

God didn't say that we would be free from sickness and trouble in this world. There are so many people down with sickness, crippled from various reasons. Are you looking for Jesus? Are you prepared?

Everyone, when he is perfected, shall be as his Master. Luke 6:40.

We are not perfected yet. There is a great chasm between our highest and our Master's lowest; between where we stop and He begins; between our light, which is twilight at best, and His meridian glory. When we compare ourselves with ourselves, or with our neighbors, our standard is altogether too low; we should compare ourself with Him, the beloved Master. Job, who was reputed perfect, abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes when he had seen God, of whom he had formerly only heard.

But we shall be perfected one day. That "when" has a hopeful ring. But to what period does the Master point? Not till sor row, sanctified by God's grace, has done its work; not till the cold and frost, the light shower and the bitter wind, the earth and sun, have contributed their shares to the desired quota. Not till the perfect image of Jesus has emerged from the sculptured stone; not till the molten metal reflects each lineament of the glorified Lord.

When we are perfected we shall be as our Master. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." It seems altogether too much to expect! To think that we shall be changed into His image; that we shall bear His impress; that we shall be as like Him as Gideon's brethren to Gideon, of whom the princes of Midian testified that they were like the children of a king. Yet it shall be so. The Lord Jesus became like us in our low estate, that we should become like Him in His glory. If you don't praise God every day, knowing that one day all His family will have a perfect body like unto Jesus one day. I'm looking for that day, what about you?

NUMBER PLEASE

When we make a telephone call we must know the number to dial. I call this God's telephone number. Jer. 33:3, "Call unto me , and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

We must learn the sacred art of prayer. God says, "Call unto Me." He likes us to address Him in prayer. We may surely believe that He will do the best, but this may degenerate into a subtle excuse for lethargy; and therefore, we must be stirred by the invitation to call upon Him. There is no assurance that He will show us these great and difficult things, unless we obey the injunction of our text to call on Him. But be sure and wait before Him until He teaches you what to pray for. The prayer which is born of God rises to God from whom it came with the certainty of an answer.

God seeks intercessors. He longs to dispense larger blessings; He longs to reveal His power and glory as God, His saving grace, His comfort and peace. But He is limited by the smallness and fewness of our prayers. He cannot do what He would for the church in the world because of our unbelief. He cries to us, call unto Me, call unto Me, little prayer, little blessing, more prayer, more blessing, much prayer, much blessing.

But what a promise is here! We long to see great things done for God in our churches and mission halls, in the hearts and lives of our friends. We long to see the difficult things unknotted, so the crooked may be made straight, and the rough smooth. But all these things shall be. The impossibilities of your life are possible to God. The mysteries of your life can yield their secrets at the summons of God. The iron gates shall open, the sea divide, the sepulchres yield their dead. Only get right with God; only let God have unhindered way through your life; only dare to believe that you have already obtained your petition and go forward in faith.

Jeremiah 33:3, "Call unto Me."

1980

DEATH AND DYING

This is a subject that most people don't like to talk about, or even think about. This is something all have to face sooner or later.

We are like children when we think of death or face the thought of dying. Like children we are afraid of the dark, of a future we cannot see. But as children are comforted by loving parents, so we can gain comfort from the promise of eternity that was given to us by God.

Our Lord has stretched out His hand to us, He gave us His Son and He allowed that Son to sacrifice for us as we come to God through the Saviour, we repent our sins and we are saved, saved. Praise God, we are born again and ready for life eternal. Jesus Christ sacrificed for us, for you, for all of us.

The Holy word of God explains very clearly that only those who remain enmeshed in their sins, only those who have not come with faith and love to Jesus, asking to be saved, need to be frightened of death.

You may be a person with a life-threatening illness, if so, consider these things:

Don't be afraid to talk about your illness. You can't make life normal again by trying to hide what is wrong.
Accept death as a part of life, it is.
Consider each day as another day of life, a gift from God to be enjoyed as fully as possible.
Realize that life never is going to be perfect in this world. It never was before, and it won't be now.
Pray - It isn't a sign of weakness, it is your strength.
Learn to live with your illness instead of considering yourself dying from it. We are all dying in some manner.
Make all practical arrangements; funeral, will, etc., and make certain your family understands them.
Set new goals; realize your limitations. Sometimes the simple things of life become the most enjoyable.
Discuss your problem with your family, after all your problem is not an individual one.

As I write this, I'm a stroke patient of almost 8 years. God's word says, through our weakness we are made strong.

May 1979

REPENT-REPENT-REPENT

This is a changing world. I could name many changes in my lifetime. Just think how air travel has advanced since Charles Lindberg became a national hero by flying solo across the Atlantic. Some other wonders of our day are satellites, rockets, nuclear power, and computers.

The sad thing about all these advances is that this rapid change has not brought corresponding blessing for mankind. Millions of people continue in constant struggle, seeking peace and happiness.

Divorce rates continue to climb. People are going more to drinking, drugs and many other evil things, seeking and searching for happiness.

Now, God has the answer today as He did 2000 years ago. The Bible tells us the greatest need for every person is a spiritual change. In Luke 13:3 Jesus said, "Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish." Repentance is a wonderful thing. It is the message of repentance that makes the gospel story a message of joy.

The call to repentance is the major theme running throughout the length of the New Testament. The message that John the Baptist preached could be summed up in one word, "Repent."

In Matthew 3:7, John told the pious, self-righteous people, "You generation of snakes, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance."

Most people do not like to be told that they are sinners. Many do not want to repent. This has been called the day of the comfortable pew and the placid pulpit, a time when few are talking about repentance.

We need bold preachers today that will preach repentance regardless of the consequences. John the Baptist had his head cut off for preaching repentance.

1. Repentance is not conviction. Conviction is necessary but not all who are convicted repent.

2. Repentance is not religion. You may be a very religious person and never repent of your sins.

3. Repentance is not being sorry for sin. There is a difference between sorrow and repentance.

4. Repentance is not making a resolution to do better. A lot of people will try to make a deal with God.

What is repentance?

Man is born with his back toward God. When he truly repents he turns right around and faces God. Repentance is a change of mind, a change of heart, and a change of action. Repentance is the change in the life of the sinner which causes him to turn away from his sin.

A sinner's idea of himself must undergo a radical revolution. He must see that he is helpless and nothing without God. Are you looking for happiness today? Have you been searching for a satisfying change in your life? Maybe the thing you need is to repent and get right with God.

February 1978

THAT YOU MAY BE CHILDREN OF GOD IN HEAVEN

I just love to read and study the Sermon On The Mount that Jesus gave many years ago. Please read Matthew 5. Jesus said in Matthew 5:45, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven".

We are made sons by regeneration, through faith in the Son; but we are called to make our calling and election sure - to approve and vindicate our right to that sacred name. We can only do this by showing in word and act that the divine life and principles animate us. Jesus teaches that the life of God, in the hearts of His children will show itself in pure and uneffected love. He says in effect, "God is good; God forgives: God bears with wrong and sin; God loves those who hate Him, blesses those who curse, bestows his favours on the false and unjust, suffers long and is kind; believes, hopes, bears all things. Therefore, if you are His children, do as He does: as I do, follow Me; live as I live; become as a bird, a lily, a little child; be pure, merciful, lowly, gentle, strong in righteousness - and you will be called the sons of God; yours will be the Kingdom of heaven."

There were several things the Lord could not say fully in this opening statement. That obedience to His precepts would inevitably conduct them to a cross; that the strength for such a life could only be secured through the coming of the Comforter; that the progress of the Kingdom would be slow and arduous - these things were for the time veiled and hidden. But his main object was to teach that Christianity must be a life after the model of God's. Christians, are you living this life? Not by a creed, a ritual, a profession; but by living the life your true nature is discerned, whether you are wheat or tare, child or hypocrite. Sometimes we are called to be as the sun, ripening souls by our genial love; at other times we refresh them as rain watering the grass.

THE LAW OF LIFE

As I sit on my front porch and admire some of the wonderful creations of God, especially in the spring, it seems things are bursting out with new life. I see the beautiful azaleas blooming, the redbuds, the maples, and the small plants shooting out of the ground showing their pretty colors. The birds are singing with joy and the bees are busy on the flowers looking for food. You can see the cattle, horses and other animals grazing on the new grass and clover that has come to new life.

God created all things, be it on land or in the water. Life goes on all about us and we need to stop and be still and know that God is God. He has never changed and never will.

Now, when God created man, He breathed into him the breath of life and man became a living soul. God created man in His own image.

When the first man "Adam" disobeyed God and sinned, then all of us were sinners by nature. God loved people so much, He made a way for all of us to come to Him through Jesus, His only son. There are two classes of people in this world, (1) those that have accepted Jesus as their savior, "saved people" and (2) those who have rejected Jesus and are lost.

Jesus made the way plain and simple. If we want to see God and go to heaven, we must go by the rules set up in the Bible. We must be born again. When you plant seeds, certain conditions have to be present for the seeds to germinate and come up and grow. So is it true for a person to become a christian and grow and have eternal life. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the truth and the Life. No man cometh to the Father but by me."

Our life in this world is but a vapor compared to eternity. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments."

Now I want to give you some scripture that is very, very important in this life. I call it the Law of Life. Matt. 22:37-40. "Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets."

Jesus came to this world and fulfilled the law and lived a sinless life. Our life as christians must be filled with the love of Jesus. This love will make us even have love for our enemies.

Thank God each day for life, and remember, Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

ONLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you." I Peter 5:10

"For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Hebrews 10:37

Such a little while! Yet a little while, how little, how little. A little while! Compared with the eternal years; with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; with the compensations which await us in the home of God. Though our life were one long agony, it would seem but as yesterday when it is past; a dream or a sleepless watch in the night, when the morning breaks.

There is a limitation to our suffering. It is only for a little while; but every moment has been fixed by the immutable purpose and love of God. The hour of darkness with an exact measurement. You shall not suffer one moment more than is absolutely necessary for your perfecting of God's glory; and for every moment there is an ample supply of grace.

But remember also that in Christ God has called you to his Eternal Glory. You heard that call years ago, and have been following it through days of evil and nights of pain. But the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and He is waiting to fulfil His eternal purpose. What a banquet that will be when God will satisfy the expectations of those whom He has called to partake of it! Praise God. Thank you, Jesus!

And the suffering is being used in ways you little understand to perfect, establish and strengthen you. It is from such chambers and torture rooms that God brings forth his veteran host in the day of battle. Think not so much of affliction as of the love of Christ, and the blessedness of being like Him and with Him forever.

1980

ADVERTISING FOR CHRIST

This is a day of advertising. All kinds of products are advertised making claims that it will do this or that. You see all kinds of comparisons made and promises made about the products.

Now let us talk about Christian advertising. So, you say you are a Christian! Is your life an advertisment for Christianity? II Co. 3:2-3. "Ye are our epistle written in our hears, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God: Not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart."

We are so to live that when people see the good we do they may give praise to our Father in Heaven. Matt. 5:16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in Heaven."

Christianity claims that it gives joy, rest, peace, and power. Is there in our lives a calm serenity, a radiant happiness, a power to cope with life that the non-Christian does not possess? Or are we just as worried and anxious, just as gloomy and grumbling, just as liable to collapse as the next man? If there is no diffrence, how can we expect others to want Christianity?

When we compare the church man with the person who never goes to church at all, is there any discernable difference? If not, how can we really expect anyone who is not a Christian to want to be a Christian?

The Christian Church promises to supply fellowship, human and divine. Does it? Does the outside world really look upon the church as a society of friends with an open door and an open heart and an open hand for all who will come in?

THERE IS AN EPIDEMIC

All down through the ages there have been epidemics of various diseases. You can recall when there were so many people with the flu that school would close down.

One of the most dreaded diseases today is cancer. I was reading where progress is being made on an anti-cancer drug. The article explained that should the new drug work on human beings as it did on animals, it can cure such difficult cancers as leukemia and bone cancer even when the diseases are far advanced.

I could not help thinking about the multitudes who have suffered from these two forms of cancer and who died desiring to hear this kind of news.

Now, I want to mention another kind of cancer. This kind is world wide and there is an epidemic. I call this cancer Sin. There has been a cure for it from the beginning of time, yet millions have died without being cured. Yes, there is a sure cure. The cure is the acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Lord andSavior, because He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the Life, and no man comes to the father except through me." Yes, He can cure the cancer we call Sin if He is accepted into the heart.

If the new drug comes on the market, people from city and country will be seeking it, because it promises hope for the extention of life. This is a natural reaction because every human being has a built in desire to live.

You would think also, that people would seek out the cure for the cancer we call Sin, yet this seems unimportant. After all, there is sufficient time and eternal life is not all that important. Take care of the physical body and preserve it for 80 years, but ignore the spiritual body that will live forever.

I appreciate modern medicine and every breakthrough that helps relieve suffering. I praise God for our scientific ability and the application of modern technology of all diseases. Yet, I cannot but ask what would happen, if we concerted our efforts in the same way cancer research does to alleviate this thing called sin cancer.

Yes, there is an epidemic of Sin cancer all over the world. What are you doing about it?

May 1978

FAMILY LIKENESS

"Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children." Eph. 5:1. Children mostly resemble their fathers. There is often an unmistakable family likeness, which compels the most casual observer to exclaim, "The very image of his father." Oh that in each of us there might be that which would make men think of God!

"Put away your former manner of life". Eph. 4:22. The old man stands for the collection of habits, sayings and doings which characterized our unregenerate days. The apostle says that they are to be put away suddenly, instantly. Evidently, this is possible, or such a command would not be issued. Men speak of a gradual reformation and advise the piecemeal discontinuance of evil. God on the contrary, bids us treat the evil past, as a company of soldiers would bandits and outlaws. There is the greater reason for this, as the old man waxeth corrupt. Even Martha could not bear the opening of her brothers vault.

"Be renewed in the Spirit of your mind." Eph. 4:23. We are reminded in Romans 12:2 the mind needs to be brought into daily, hourly contact with God's thought, as contained in Scripture, that it may be renewed; else our constant association with men and women of the world, their maxims and practices, will inevitably and sorrowfully deteriorate it. The only source of daily renewal is fellowship with God.

Put on the new man. Of this the apostle affirms that it is according to God, and has been created. Our Lord created this beauteous dress when He rose from the dead. The day of resurrection was one of creation. All the habits and dispositions of a holy God-like life have been prepared for us in Him, and await our appropriation; and as they are according to God, so soon as we put them on we shall become imitators of God as dear children.

Is your daily life Christ like?

1981

PRAY CHRISTIAN, PRAY

When I was a young Christian I didn't really realize the importance of prayer as I do now. I used to wonder why my father prayed so much, but now I understand. My father had a special place across the branch from the house in a little pine thicket where he would go and get on his knees and cry out to God. Oh! how we need more of this today.

Someone made this comparison "to be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." What air is to the lungs, and what blood is to the body, prayer is to the believer in Jesus Christ.

Many Christians neglect prayer and hence live defeated and powerless lives. If we want spiritual power we must be praying Christians.

You may ask, "What is prayer?" You could look up the word prayer in the dictionary, but let us look in God's word. Jer. 33:3 "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not." Luke 11:9 "And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." James 4:2-3 "We fail to receive because we don't ask; we ask and don't receive because we ask amiss."

Why pray? Because God said to pray. Luke 18:1 "Men ought always to pray and not faint." Jesus did much praying and gave us an example. Did you know that right now He is making intercession for you? (Heb. 7:25)) Prayer was the example in the early church. Acts 1:14 "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Prayer was a source of power back in those days and still is today.

God's people are to be humble people. James 4:6 "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." We should ask God for specific things. Pray expecting God to answer. Heb. 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

If we have unconfessed sin in our life, God will not hear our prayer. Psalm 66:18 "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." So you see, you must pray obediently to God. Sin blocks out our communication with God. It knocks down the power lines.

We must submit ourselves to God and pray that His will be done in our lives.

Did you ever stop to think that until by faith you become a part of God's wonderful family, you really can't pray, "Our Father which are in heaven."

1975

GET ON AND STAY ON THE RIGHT CIRCUIT

In this marvelous day of radio, television, telephone and telegraph, it is almost unbelievable some of these many wonders - just to think we can talk to people most anywhere in this world - we can also see things happening most any place, even on the moon.

There are certain conditions to be met first; we have to turn on the right station or have the right number hook-up. When you stop to think, there are many things going on through the atmosphere, but unless we have the right hook-up, we fail to hear or see them.

God tells us a lot about prayer in His word. As Christians, we need to stay in touch with God and be continuously in prayer. God tells us to pray and to ask. I Thessalonians 5:15-16 - "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for your God gives us the ability to stay in constant fellowship with Him."

Don't wait until you are in some kind of trouble to pray. Psalms 34:15-17, "The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears toward their cry. The face of the Lord is against evildoers, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles."

Now there are certain requirements and conditions to be met to be on the right circuit with God. John 15:7, "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you". We must have faith and not have any doubt at all. Do you really abide in the Lord? Does it seem the door to God's prayer answers hinges on our "abiding" in Christ? Do we really believe what God says in His word? Then why don't we claim His promises to us? We will then be hooked up to the right circuit when we pray.

If you were asked, "what is prayer?", if you are a Christian you may answer - prayer is a great source of power, prayer is a cleaning compound for our minds, prayer is an admission that we believe there is a God, prayer is just talking to God, prayer is praising God for what He has done for you, prayer is listening to God to find out His will for your life, prayer is the way God talks to you, prayer is a two-way street between just you and God, prayer is a heavenly communication system, prayer is that which removes you from the worldly world and transports you to a spiritual world, prayer is asking God to show you what He wants you to do, prayer is how we reach God and how God reaches us, prayer is the way we ask for miracles for others, and prayer is the answer to loveliness.

In Ephesians 6:18 Paul writes, "Pray at all times in the spirit, with all prayer and supplication." One very important thing as Christians we need to pray for is wisdom. James 1:5-7 - "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord."

Now, Christians, if your prayers are not answered, there is something in your life that is hindering you from being on the right circuit with God. Oh what a joy it is for God to hear and answer our prayers.

SEARCH - SEARCH - SEARCH

When I was in college I remember having to do some research on some subject that I was required to write a paper on. I would go to the library and look and look and read and read to find what I needed.

Do you thank God each day for the Bible because it is the most treasured book in the world today? We can think of the Bible as a gold mine. I've never been around a gold mine, but I know there has to be something done to receive any benefit. You can keep a Bible with you all the time and keep one handy at home, but unless you search and find out what God's word says to you, you will receive no good.

The living word of our living God stars Jesus, and you cannot hold on to Christ and give up the Bible. You cannot believe in the cross and surrender the infallible authority of the Bible. Faith in the deity of Christ is married to faith in the inspiration of the Bible.

Yes, Jesus Christ - the Creator of all things in earth and heaven, the one mediator between God and man. The Redeemer who "bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (I Peter 2:24). The center of the Book is the cross of Christ. The circumference of the Book is the glory of Christ.

Jesus is the vital substance that gives meaning to the Bible's genealogies, meaning to histories, meaning to its chronologies. Take Jesus out of the Bible and it would be like taking calcium out of lime, carbon out of diamonds, truth out of history, invention out of fiction, matter out of physics, mind out of metaphysics, numbers out of mathematics.

Christ Jesus alone is the secret of the Bible's strength, beauty and unity. Christ Jesus - sometimes called "one hour of God on earth," the full comprehensive, all-sufficient, ultimate revelation of God, is the foundation and keystone of the arches of the great Bible building.

Jesus himself said in John 5:39, 45-47, "Search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me...Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if you believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words."

What an inspiration it is to know that the greatest Book ever printed on earth has as its theme the greatest Being who ever trod the earth, Jesus Christ.

May 1975

LOVE IS THE KEY

If you had to select the one thing that is lacking in most homes, churches, communities and most everywhere, the answer is love.

There seems to be more envy, jealously, lust, and hatred than I ever remember in my lifetime. I Cor. 13:13 - "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love." Read all the 13th chapter of I Cor.

After Jesus announced his going, He gives his disciples "A new commandment", that they love one another. Discipleship is tested not by the creed you recite; not by the hymns you sing; not by the ritual you observe, but by the fact that you love one another. The measure in which Christians love one another is the measure in which the world believes in them or their Christ. It is the final test of discipleship. Jesus says in John 15:12 - "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." It is easy to say, "I love you." We as Christians need more action and less talk.

Are you guilty of this? I John 4:20 - "If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

Another reason I say "Love is the key", is because the source of human redemption is shown to be divine love - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." God is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, and quickened us together with Christ. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Yes, the message of the Bible is the message of a divine love for sinful men in the heart of a holy God. God manifested His love to us in both word and deed.

As love is seen in the scriptures to be the source of redemption, divine wisdom is seen in its plan. Read the first chapter of I Corinthians.

Many hundreds of passages of scripture could be given to show the divine plan of redemption, originating in God's love and executed through His wisdom, altogether wrought by pure grace.

The question is, have you been redeemed and born again? God gives each person in this world a choice; eternity in heaven or hell. Thank God I have been redeemed and I am looking for Jesus to come back soon.

CAUTION, ROUGH ROAD AHEAD

I would like to consider a few things concerning Christians, especially young Christians. When I say young, I mean those that haven't been long being born again.

You may wonder about the title of this article. As you know Satan is much alive and very active in this world. He has his members and is trying to deceive all the Christians he can. Now, caution means warning. Rough means not smooth. God's record tells us we are going on a broad road or a narrow road. Which road are you on? Can you name any Christian in the Bible that had an easy, smooth live? They knew what was at the end of that narrow road.

Now, I would like to mention the things that I feel are making more people want to travel on the broad road. I John 3:15-16 - "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Verse 16 tells us what this is talking about. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." These are all tools of the devil and he is well using them on people today. II Tim. 3:13 - "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Satan is in the deceiving business. Don't think Satan is an ignorant person because with all the many wonders that have been accomplished and all the highly educated people we still read in II Tim. 3:7 - "Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

We read in Ephesians 6:12 some things that we are up against as Christians. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world. Against spiritual wickedness in high places." So you see, God warns us to our enemies, who they really are, who is behind the drugs and the dirt that seeks to capture the minds of young and old. So insidious are the clever ways in which Satan attacks on the hearts and homes of all men everywhere today that no man knows the full extent of his evil penetration.

Remember, Satan comes to church too, and he will let jealousy bring division between brothers in Christ. He loves to get Christians so off-balanced on doctrinal issues that we forget to love and accept those real brothers who differ with us.

God always gives us the answer how to face any situation in this world. We read in Ephesians 6:13-18 - "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God . Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

The Christian life is a maturing process. Learning what Christ accomplished at the cross is the most important truth you will ever absorb in your life time. It should saturate your mind every day. Satan would like to blind us to all this wonderful truth.

KEEP YOUR GUARD UP

Most Christians underestimate the power of Satan. . Satan is always present to ruin your life, but God is always present to give you strength to resist Satan and all his forces. James 4:7 "Submit yourself to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you."

In reading the fourth chapter of Matthew, I find where Jesus was tempted by the devil. Jesus told him, "Get out of here Satan." The scriptures say, "worship only the Lord God. Obey only Him." Then satan went away and the angels came and cared for Jesus. Christians, wake up, you have a mighty power within you which is the Holy Spirit. Eph. 6:11, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Keep in mind Satan is very cunning and full of tricks.

Eph. 5:11, " Take no part in the worthless pleasures of evil and darkness, but instead rebuke and expose them."

I Peter 5:8-9, "Be careful and be on guard at all times, because the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour." Stand firm when he attacks, trust the Lord, and remember other Christians all around the world are going through these sufferings too.

John 5:4, Every Christian can obey God defeating sin and evil pleasure by trusting Christ to help him.

Romans 8:38-39, Paul says, For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from His love, death can't, and life can't. The angels won't, and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God's love away.

GOD'S WORD
BELIEVING AND SUBMISSION

The only way the word of God will get results is when we believe it and submit to its requirements.

What will these results be? First, it will impart spiritual life and save the soul. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and super fluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." (John 1:21) "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but by incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever." (I Peter 1:23) "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures (James 1:18). "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." (John 6:63) Praise the Lord for these words. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption, that is in the world through lust." (II Peter 1:4) A spiritual life makes a difference. "Therefore if any man be in Christ,he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (II Cor. 5:17).

Second, God's Word has cleansing power. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to the Word." (Psalm 119:9) Jesus said, "Now ye are clean through the Word, which I have spoken unto you." (John 15:3) The church is cleansed by the Word, "That He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word." (Ehp.5:26)

Third, by the word we are kept from evil and the power of the evil one. "Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the path of the destroyer" (Psalm 17:4) "Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is thy delight" (119:77) "I have given them thy word: and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth." (John 17:14,17). "The voice said, cry, and He said 'what shall I cry all flesh is grass, and all the godliness thereof is as the flower of the field.' "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but

the Word of God shall stand forever." (Isa. 40:6,8) When we have God's Word in our heart, that is one thing that will never fail us. "Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail: whether there be tongues, they shall fail, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

I have presented you with some scripture showing the results of God's Word. Remember, only by believing and submission will God's Word have any effect on your life.

1979

UNLOCK THE GATES OF A NEW DAY

How do you begin each day? What better way could there be to unlock the gates of a new day in reading God's Word and prayer? Under the old Testament law, the Levites were required to arise and "stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord and like wise in the afternoon." I Chron. 23:30. We also notice in this chapter where Aaron was separated, he and his sons forever, to minister unto Him.

The threefold office of Aaron suggests our own. When we are prepared to follow Jesus through the rent veil of HIs flesh, living a truly separated life, cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, we also as chosen priests, may exercise these functions of intercession, ministry and blessing. All believers are priests - I Peter 2:5,9. Verse 9 - "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praise of him who hath called you out of darkness into the marvelous light.

INTERCESSION. The fragrant incense stealing heavenward is a beautiful emblem of intercessory prayer. Let us pray more, not for ourselves so much as for others. This is the sign of growth in grace, when our prayers are fragrant with the name of friend and foe and mingled with the coals of the golden altar. This is one of the best gifts; to exercise it more persistently.

MINISTRY. We have many things to engage our attention, but they may be unified and elevated by the one threading purpose of doing all for the King. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever else we do, we may do all to His glory. Engage in song,or service or whatever ministry you will: but be sure all is of Him, and through Him, and to Him forever.

BLESSING. As Aaron came forth from the most Holy Place to bless the congregation that waited for him, so we should bless that little portion of the world in which our lot is cast. It is not enough to linger

in soft prayer within the veil, we must come forth to bless mankind. He who is nearest God is closest man. Let our smile, our touch, our words, our life, be the greatest blessing possible to those who know us best.

Blessed spirit, realize through each of us this threefold ideal, and separate us from sin and the world that we may be prepared for it. Help us to start each day right.

1981

PRAYING FOR THE UNSAVED

Mark 10:27 - "With men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible."

II Corinthians 10:4-5 - "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God to the pulling down of strong holds: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

John 6:63 - "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

II Corinthians 3:6 - "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life."

II Corinthians 2:14 - "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph, maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place."

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

If you should die today, do you know you would go to Heaven? Take a few moments to consider life's most important question. Death is certain for every human, and after death the judgment. See Hebrews 9:27. In addition, our life is fragile, and very brief, and every breath is given to us momentarily from God. "Whereas you know not what shall be on the tomorrow, for what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." James 4:14. We can know that we are God's children and ready for heaven. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (I John 5:13).

There are four simple facts that we must know and accept by faith to become a Christian.

First, we must know we are sinners. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. God declared that all of us have fallen short of the glory of God and thereby are sinners. We have missed God's mark or standard of perfect righteousness, which is seen in Jesus Christ.

Second, we must know that we owe a sin debt. "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). It is important to see that the "death" means more than physical death, the death here is described in Revelation 20:14 as the second death or eternal death. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire, this is the second death." After physical death the unbeliever must receive the eternal death of separation from God in the lake of fire forever. In John 3:18 we read that the unbeliever is already condemned before God. He is already under the sentence of sin and is awaiting execution of that sentence of the Great white Throne Judgment.

Third, we must know that Jesus Christ paid our sin penalty on the cross. "But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Romans 5:8. There is nothing we can do to pay that sin debt we owe to God. Attending church, living a good life and being baptized are all human works that do not meet God's demand. But, God demonstrated his love for us as sinners by sending Jesus, His Son, to die for us and to pay the debt. The only way that Christ could have paid our sin debt was to do it as a sinless person. That is why he was born of a virgin - he did not inherit a sin nature. And that is why the Bible teaches he was able to live a perfect, sinless life, he was qualified to pay our debt. II Cor. 4:21 and Isaiah 53:2 tells us that 2000 years ago God took every sin we ever committed and laid those on Jesus Christ when Jesus died on the cross. He bore our sins and paid our penalty of divine judgment on sin.

Finally, we must know that we can be saved by faith in Jesus Christ and His word. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Romans 10:9, 10:13. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16.

Believing on Christ means more than believing on all the facts about Him. It means to turn from our sin and whatever we are trusting in to get to heaven and trust Him fully for salvation. Have you had a new birth?

THANK GOD FOR HIS GRACE

Sinful man needs a spiritual cleansing. He must be forgiven completely so that he is removed from the sphere of condemnation to the place of acceptance by the Almighty. The salvation that God has provided through the gift of His love does exactly that. That deliverance, that freedom from the judgment of God upon sin has been made possible because of God's grace. Read Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace are you saved through faith." Yes, salvation is ours by Grace. I'm thankful for that because not one of us as sinners could ever save ourselves.

God knew before the creation, who would accept His plan of salvation. Because He said in II Thes. 2:13, "God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation." From the beginning! Who shall compute the contents of the vast unknown abyss, which is comprehended in that phrase? The beginning of creation was preceded by the anticipation of redemption, and the love of God to all who were one with Christ.

God's Aim and Purpose - Salvation. Not simply our deliverance from the penalty but from the power of all besetting sin; so that we may be delivered from the fear of our enemies, and serve Him in holiness and righteousness all our days. This, He is prepared to give to us; but we must claim it by faith.

God's Choice. Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate. From all eternity He saw those who would be attracted to Jesus by a divine affinity, and these were included in His gift to the Son. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me, and they have kept thy word." We must not presume on the eternal choice; but we may be very grateful that the tendencies emanating from the fall are met, in midflow, by the grace and choice of the Almighty.

God's Method Through Sanctification of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost sets us apart from sin, and consecrates to God. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For you are bought with a price." Our sanctification is not the property of our soul, but its possession of the Holy One; not an attribute, but a person. And belief of the truth. Let the word of God dwell in you richly. Hide it in your heart, that you may be kept from sin. We are sanctified by the truth in so far as we expose our hearts to its entrance and rule. We are cleansed by the washing of water through the Word.

1980

CHRISTIANS BELONG TO GOD

"For you are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your Spirit, which are God's." I Cor. 6:20.

"Know ye that the Lord He is God: It is He that has made us, and not we ourselves: we are His people and the sheep of His pasture." Psalm 100:3.

The sense of God's proprietorship is the true basis of our consecration. We must realize His rights over us before we can freely give Him His due. Those rights are manifold in their sweet reasonableness; but amongst them all, this of creation is one of the chief. God has a right to us because He has made us.

He made us as the potter fashions the clay, for a distinct purpose; and surely He has a right to use the vessels of His workmanship for the purpose unto which He has designed them.

He made us, as a builder erects a house for the purpose of inhabiting it; and surely He has the right to occupy every distinct room, and go to and fro in it as he may please.

He made us as the hand of the weaver makes some textile fabric for wearing; and surely He must not be debarred from the free and unquestioned disposal of that on which He has expended anxiety and time.

We are Christ's be creation, by purchase, by toils and tears, by the gift of the Father. The Good Shepherd owns us, though we do not always acknowledge His ownership, or repay His pains and wounds on our behalf. Look up into His face and say, "I am thine by a myriad of ties and am bound to Thee for evermore. Lead me where thou wilt; guide me whither Thou choosest; count me as one of thy people; feed me on thy pasture-lands; make as much of me as thou canst; this side of heaven; number me with thy saints in glory.

With bowed heads and open hearts, "may we offer ourselves; we can do no more, and we dare do no less."

1980

IN THIS WORLD
WHAT IS YOUR SCORE?

Born again (spiritual birth) or I just decided to turnover a new leaf. Is your walk in life changed? II Cor. 5:17 - "If any man be in Christ, he a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

What about this world we live in? Gal. 1:4 - "Jesus gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." The scheme of things as they exist today is not the standard for the Christian. If you are obeying them, you are walking on forbidden ground. What is your relationship with the world system as a Christian? I John 2:15 says "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

I John 2:16 - "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." All sins may be put into three categories: (1) lust of the flesh, (2) lust of the eyes, (3) pride of life. A Christian cannot continue in worldliness and expect to have fellowship with God. We have a two-fold command - (1) "Do not love the world", the world system under which Satan has organized fallen mankind upon his God opposing principles of pride, selfishness and ambition. Remember how Satan tempted Jesus. Temptations come through the body and its appetites and passions. Satan showed Jesus things of the world - your eyes blacken your soul.

Be careful what you see - God's Word says to abstain from the very appearance of evil. Everyone wants spectacular success. Some people would sell their very souls to gain what they want. (2) "Nor the things of the world", such as its wealth, pleasure or honors. It is useless to claim we do not love the world yet love what it offers.

Have you ever thought about the reasons why God's Word gives us warnings about all this? Love for the world excludes love for God. If anyone goes on loving the world, love for the Father is not in him. So contrary is the evil world to all that God is, both cannot be loved at the same time. The world endorses "the lust of the flesh," the keen desire of the unregenerate man centered upon self and opposed to God. Romans 7:18 - "For I know that in my (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good things for to will is present with me: but how to perform that which is good I find not." The "lust of the eyes", those keen appetites which master our body, soul and spirit through the eye gate. Read II Samuel, chapter 11 about David. Read also what happened in Joshua 7:21. Psalm 119:37 says, "turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way." "The pride of life", that is, the vain,

glorious display of godless living. Thus the evil world is completely at variance with our infinitely Holy God. II Peter 1:4 - "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

How would you score your worldly life compared with your daily spiritual life?

QUALITY CHRISTIANS

When I was teaching Vocational Agriculture, I tried to stress the importance of producing quality crops and raising quality live stock. Certain standards had to be met to be classed as quality.

Now getting to the subject, I firmly believe the reason so many churches are cold and not very active is that there are not many quality Christians in the church. God's Word tells us we are to grow and be strong in the Lord and not remain babes in Christ.

There are many ways or things you can do to make you a quality Christian. These are some for your consideration:

1. Put Christ first in your life, every day, not just on Sunday.

2. Get up earlier in the morning and spend at least five or ten minutes talking to God.

3. Get involved in church work.

4. Avoid gossip. If you can't say something good, keep quiet.

5. Be a witness and missionary for Christ.

6. Study God's Word some each day because it is the only guide line for our lives.

7. Keep growing and don't worry, but let your faith be increased from day to day.

Paul tells us in Philippians that the duty of every Christian is to be joyful. A long-faced Christian is the worst advertisement against Christianity. You may say, how can a Christian be joyful in a world so full of trouble and sorrow? Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord."

In closing, "Happy is the person who finds God's plan for their life and falls in with it."

September 1976

HEART TROUBLE

Jesus taught and many times used parables to make His word more easy to understand. Matthew 13:18-25. This chapter has a lot of meaning to me, because I was an agriculture teacher for many years. Sowing seed and soil were studied a lot.

The parable of the sower illustrates the importance of the follow through. Only one forth of the soil was ready for the seed, so only one forth of the seed brought forth fruit.

Jesus explains the parable: (1) The sower is the witness. (2) The seed is the word of God. (3) The soil is the heart. We also learn there are four types of hearts. The Hard Heart; this is the wayside soul, fertile but hard. The Shallow Heart; this is the stony soil, fertile but depthless. The Worldly Heart; this is the thorny soil, fertile but possessed. The Understanding Heart; this is good soil, fertile but prepared.

Can't you see the lesson here is a simple one. If we expect the seed, the Word of God, to bear fruit, the heart must be made ready. The hard heart must be broken, the shallow heart must be given depth, the worldly heart must be taught the things of the world are temporal.

In Mark 7:20-22 Jesus said, "that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, foolishness, all these evil things come from within."

Each person falls under one of the types of hearts I've mentioned. How well do you listen when the word is preached? This has a lot to do in the way we grow. God wants us to have a productive fruitful life. Could it be, the way we listen determines how we grow? Where you are today is the result of how you've been listening.

I pray God will give you a deep inner sense of hungering, thirsting, yearning and driving within you to grow in the Lord.

1985

ARE YOU A TALEBEARER?

Some people seem to thrive on some smut they have heard on some person - the more it is told the bigger it get - are you guilty?

"Where not wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. Prov. 26:20." How simple a parable! Of course, it must be so. As soon as a fire has reached the end of the material on which it fed, it expires.

This is true of the fire of slander. As long as there is an ear to receive, and a tongue to pass on, some place of malicious slander will continue to circulate. But directly, it reaches a hearer who will not whisper it forward; in that direction at least its progress is arrested. Why do you not adopt this role, and urge others to do so? Hear if you must the whisper of the slanderer; but let it stop with you, locked in the secret of your breast. You may be voted rather uninteresting and stupid by a certain society which thrives in whispered calamities; but torn and lacerated by unkindness and falsehood.

How graphic that word "whisper" is! People always tell you to be sure not to tell; it is a way they have, though they do not expect you for a moment to keep the story to yourself. It is the kiss under which they betray. Always tell them that you refuse to be an accomplice in evil. If there is a wrong concerning which you must neither take action nor speak, you had better not defile your ear with it.

This is true of the fire of the Holy Ghost. You must feed it by your loving obedience, your study of the word of God, your faith and prayer. Yield yourself more entirely to His possession. Let your spirit, soul and body, your every act and desire, be as fuel to the Spirit of God. Pile up the wood of continual sacrifice and self-surrender, till the divine fire reaches out its hands toward heaven. Even though the wood like Elijah's be drenched with water, God's file will conquer!

"For the lack of wood, the fire goeth out.

1980

PRAYER IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHANGES THINGS

Someone made this comparison, "to be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." What air is to the lungs, and blood is to the body, prayer is to the believer in Jesus Christ.

Many Christians neglect prayer and hence live defeated and power less lives. I f we want spiritual power we must be praying Christians.

If we have unconfessed sin in our life, God will not hear our prayer. Psalm 66:18 - "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." So you see, you must pray obediently to God. Sin blocks out our communication with God. It knocks down the power lines.

Luke 18:1 - "Men ought to always pray and not faint." We should always pray in the Name of Jesus.

There are many examples of prayer in God's Word. I want to consider one. James 5:16 - "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." This was true under the old covenant and is certainly true under the new covenant and if prayer operates in the natural realm, as in Elijah's praying for the drought, and then for rain, how much more in the spiritual realm, as we pray for the release of divine power to save men and nations from the tyranny of sin.

James 5:1;7-18. Elijah prayed earnestly that it might not rain and he prayed again and the heaven gave rain. Notice he prayed earnestly. This lets out a secret. Read this account in first Kings.

It is time we Christians, "believed our beliefs" again in this matter of prayer. We must resolutely believe again that God answers prayer, whatever it may involve in relation to cosmic laws. Divine power is called into operation by the prayers of God's people.

It was one thing for Elijah to pray for a chastising drought. It was another thing praying for impenitent human rebels like Ahab and backslidden Israel. Elijah is a challenge to us today. God knows we need a new generation of praying Elijahs. Were times ever more urgent or ominous? Were the issues ever more immense or more desperate? Our ministers need to pray more; our church leaders need to pray more; all Christian believers need to pray more. Prayer operates not only individually but nationally and internationally. We claim to believe this, but do we implement it by practice? We should daily spread the modern situation before God in prayer. Why, the very reason James refers to Elijah is to illustrate his statement in verse 16 - "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

The voice of the hour to you and me is PRAY, PRAY, PRAY.

March 1978

STRENGTH

Did you ever hear a person say, "I'm so weak I can hardly get up and down or so weak I can hardly walk?" There are many people today who are physically weak. I don't know of anything that will make a person as physically weak as a stroke.

I want to ask each one who reads this - "Are you spiritually weak?" If you miss eating food your body will naturally grow weak. If you fail to feed your soul, you will become spiritually weak.

Psalm 23:3 - "He restoreth my soul." Yes, God's supply never runs out. Psalm 28:7 - "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore, my heart greatly rejoiceth and with my song will I praise Him."

Why is it so important to be strong in the Lord? What should we do? Ephesians 6:10-11 - "Finally brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Nehemiah 8:10 - "The joy of the Lord is my strength." So you see if we get joy in serving Christ, it gives us strength.

We are told in several places in God's Word to wait on the Lord. Isaiah 40:31 - "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." While we are waiting on the Lord, study God's Word, do much praying, attend church services, and stay in the center of God's will. For some encouraging words read II Corinthians 12:9-10.

A GOOD MAN

How many men do you know that you would call good? That would be a good compliment. I've heard people say, that's a good man.

I was listening to a sermon on the radio September 18th, and the preacher read about a good man in God's Word. This man was Barnabas. "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people were added unto the Lord." Acts 11:24. This is the Holy Spirit's verdict on the character and life of Barnabas. Very different from the magnificent inscriptions on the tombs of warriors and statesmen; but it was better to deserve this at the lips of the Master than to have the longest list of titles ever appended to a mortal's name. For a good man like this some would even dare to die. The characteristics of this good man were these:

1. He could see the good in movement outside his own church order. The church at Antioch originated as this paragraph proves, in the preaching of a number of unknown, unordained refugees, who were fleeing from the iron hand of persecution. All we know of them is that they were men of Cyrus and Cyrene. They had broken through the barrier of the ages by preaching to the Gentiles, great numbers of whom had been saved. The church in Jerusalem was somewhat suspicious of this new departure, and sent Barnabas; but when he came, he was forthwith convinced of its genuineness, saw the evidence of the hand of the Lord, and was glad. No jealousy, nor narrow bigotry, nor suspicion, warped his judgment.

2. He was willing that another should share with himself the joys of harvest. He went off to Tarsus to seek his old acquaintance and perhaps fellow student, Paul. And for a whole year the two wrought side by side in living fellowship, and taught much people.

3. He was eager that people should be added to the Lord. Too often, good men seek a following for themselves, and rejoice in those who are added to the church or organization. This is not the noblest style of work. It is better far to imitate the Baptist who was content to be the Bridegroom's friend.

MATHEMATICS FOR CHRISTIANS

SUBTRACTION: We are to abstain from anything that will bring corruption in our lives. The fruits of the flesh will bring corruption in a person's life; these are: adultery, fornication, uncleaness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murderers, drunkeness and revellings.

MULTIPLIED: Keep this in mind, if you are a Christian your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. How are we to become more Christ like each day? Well, according to II Peter 1:2 - "Grace and peace are multiplied in our lives." How? T hrough the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. Now God has given us exceeding great and precious promises that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature.

ADDITION: If we as Christians want to take on more of this divine nature and increase our faith, we must add some things in our life. These are virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity. What if you possess all these things? They make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SUBTRACTION: If the above things are omitted or subtracted from your life, the results are; you will be blind and cannot see afar off and you will forget that you were purged from your old sins.

DIVISION: Love - God is love - Love your neighbor as yourself. You can't have the love of Christ within you and not want to share it with others.

June 1977

GUIDANCE

It seems we are living in a world of confusion. There are so many young folks who finish high school and have very little idea what they want to do as a profession in life. We have good guidance departments and counselors in most high schools to help. There are so many that will not take good advice today.

You know when we leave God out of our planning that is when things are usually a failure. God can guide us is in all phases of life if we will only let Him.

First, God will guide and tell you how to be saved. His plan is just the same as it was when it was first written.

Now, let us look at some things that may help you along life's journey. Psalm 32:8, 37:23 - "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with my eye. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and He delighteth in his way." How important is God's word. Psalm 119:105 - "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." We will not go wrong if we rely on God's word. Jesus said: "I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" - John 8:12. Does your life reflect light or darkness?

In this fast moving world, I would say, slow down, stop, be still and listen to what God is saying to you. Isaiah 30:21 - "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it when ye turn to the right hand and when you turn to the left."

Psalm 23:3 - "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake." If you want the perfect guide, choose Jesus today.

WHAT ABOUT FAITH?

Sometime look up all the places in the Bible where faith is mentioned. You will find that it is a very, very important thing in a Christian's life. In fact, in Hebrews 11:6 read - "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God, must believe that He is a rewarder of them that diligent ly seek Him." Now what is faith? We read in Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. What does faith have to do with a person being saved? We read in Ephesians 2:8-9 - "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."

Now the devil is ever present to cause confusion and doubt, even to a Christian's faith. This trouble arises from the fact that the subject of faith is very generally misunderstood; for, in reality, faith is the simplest and plainest thing in the world, and the most easy of exercise.

Your idea of faith, I suppose, has been something like this. You have looked upon it as in some way a sort of thing, either a religious exercise of soul, or an inward, gracious disposition of heart; something tangible, in fact, which, when you have secured it, you can look at and

rejoice over, and use as a passport to God's favor, or a coin to purchase His gifts. And you have been praying for faith, expecting all the while to get something like this; and never having received any such thing, you are insisting upon it that you have no faith. Now faith, in fact, is not in the least like this. It is nothing at all tangible. It is simply believing God; and like sight, it is nothing apart from its object. You might as well shut your eyes and look inside, and see whether you have sight, as to look inside to discover whether you have faith. You see something, and thus know that you have sight; you believe something, and thus know that you have faith. For sight is only seeing, so faith is only believing. And as the only necessary thing about sight is that you see the thing as it is, so the only necessary thing about belief is that you believe the thing as it is. The virtue does not lie in your believing, but in the thing you believe. If you believe the truth, you are saved; if you believe a lie, you are lost. The act of believing in both cases is the same; the things believed are exactly opposite, and this is which makes the mighty difference. Your salva tion comes, not because your faith saves you, but because it links you to the Savior who saves; and your believing is really nothing but the link.

I do beg of you to recognize then, the extreme simplicity of faith; namely, that it is nothing more nor less than just believing God when He says He either has done something for us, or will do it; and then trusting Him to keep His word. It is so simple it is hard to explain. If anyone asked me what it means to trust another to do a piece of work for me, I can only answer that it means committing the work to that other, and leaving it, without anxiety, in his hands. All of us have many times trusted very important affairs to others in this way, and have felt perfect rest in this trusting, because of the confidence we have had in those who have undertaken them. Stop and think of the many that you have trusted and trust each day for many things.

It is possible that you can trust your fellow man, and cannot trust your God; that you can receive the "witness of men" and cannot receive the "witness of God," that you can believe man's records, and cannot believe God's records; that you can commit your dearest earthly interest to your weak, failing fellow- creature without a fear, and are afraid to commit your spiritual interest to the Savior who laid down his life for you and of whom it is declared that He is "able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him."

When a believer really trusts anything, he ceases to worry about the thing he has trusted. And when he worries, it is plain proof that he does not trust. Tested by this rule, how little real trust there is in the Church of Christ! No wonder the Lord asked the pathetic question - Luke 18:8, "When the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" He will

find plenty of work, a great deal of earnestness; and doubtless many consecrated hearts; but shall He find faith, the one thing He values more than all the rest. Every child of God, in his own case, will know how to answer this question.

We are told that all things are possible to God, and that all things are possible also to him that believeth. Faith, in times past, "subdues kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained prom ises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight to armies of the aliens." And faith can do it again. For our Lord Himself says unto us, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Let your faith, then "throw its arms around all God has told you," and in every dark hour remember that "though now for a season, it need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold tempta tions," it is only like going through a tunnel. The sun has not ceased shining because the traveler through the tunnel has ceased to see it; and the Son of righteousness is still shining, al though you, in your dark tunnel, do not see him. Be patient and trustful, and wait. This time of darkness is only permitted that "the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

LIVING WITH A STROKE

On Sunday afternoon, June 20, 1971, I was carried to Lumberton Hospital with a kidney stone attack. All who have had kidney stone attacks know that it is a severe pain.

On Wednesday, June 23, about 11:00 a.m., I dropped my water cup on the floor and got down to pick it up and that is when the stroke hit me. I could not imagine what had happened. I could not get up. All my left side felt like it was dead. This really puzzled the doctor because I was only 55 years old and had not been bothered with high blood pressure.

They told me that I had a stroke and transferred me to the Methodist Hospital in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. They really went to work on me, giving me shots, drip, and X-rays.

I was moved to the V.A. Hospital in Jackson, Mississippi on July 1 and was there until September 2, 1971.

I read where there are about two million people in the United States who have had a stroke and many are disabled because of it. I found that a stroke is caused by some damage to the brain. This may be caused by (1) A blood vessel (artery) in the brain breaks and blood escapes, or (2) A clot of blood blocks an artery in the brain. These are the main causes of a stroke. In my case, it was the first one.

Usually the part of the brain that is damaged controls the mus cles that move the arm, hand, and fingers, and the leg, foot and toes on one side of the body. Sometimes the part of the brain that controls the ability to speak is affected, and sometimes, as with any sick person, the patient may not be able to think clear ly. Doctors say there are no two strokes alike.

My stroke was on my left side and it affected me from the top of my head to my toes. My whole left side did not have any feeling at all. I knew these parts of my body were there but I could not make them move at all. I even had trouble closing my left eye. You would have to experience this to really understand it.

As I lay in bed, naturally the first thing that came into my mind was, why me, Lord? Then I thought about how thankful I was that it was my left side as I am right-handed and could write and speak.

I lay there for weeks trying to make some part move. The doctor would come by and see if I had any feeling in my foot. I worked with my arm and leg for hours and hours trying to get life in them so they would move and not get stiff. After about a month, they put me in a wheel chair and carried me to the therapy room. My arm was exercised by pulling it up and down from a pulley. then they started me trying to walk between bars. Later they tried to teach me to walk with a cane.

It has been extremely hard to adjust as I have always been real active. I was a teacher of vocational agriculture. I enjoyed my work and enjoyed hunting and fishing. When all these things suddenly stopped, it really will try a person's patience.

I have learned to do many things with one hand that I did not know could be done with only one hand. After almost eight and a half years I still cannot use my left arm - I can walk some with the use of a cane. There are times I feel like I cannot make it not being able to do a lot of the little jobs around the house. I always liked to garden, work with flowers, and make things with my hands. Each day I have to keep saying that this is something I have to live with and make the best of it.

My advice to stroke patients is not to give up. Exercise each day, think on the good things of life, read and have an interest in people. Read God's word and pray and He will give you strength to live. Remember God spared you life for some reason.

SOMETHING WONDERFUL
A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Most people are really happy when they receive something new. How we rejoice when a new baby is born into our family.

God said if we are to be part of his family, we must be born again. Did you know that there is rejoicing in heaven when a person is born into the family of God? Let us examine some of the new things a believer has in Christ.

1. NEW BIRTH - When we hear the story of the gospel and believe, we are born again by the Spirit of God. Nicodemus had heard about Jesus' teaching and came to see Him. This religious leader was puzzled when Jesus told him, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God' (John 3:3). Jesus was telling him that he needed a second birth - a spiritual birth. Tthere was no way he could patch up, fix up, or refabricate the old life - he needed a new life, life from above.

This new life is given to a person at the moment of his new birth.

The source of this new life is described in Ephesians 2:1, "And you hath He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins." A little later Paul wrote, "But God --- even when we were dead in sins hath made us alive together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:4-5). We were spiritually dead; we could do nothing to help ourselves. But when we became Christians, God gave us new spiritual life.

2. NEW FAMILY - The moment we were born again, we entered a new family - the family of God. We are told in John 1:12, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name."

Before, we were of "our father" the devil. We were part of the wicked kingdom. But now by faith, we are accepted as full fledged members of God's household. We have all the rights and privileges of sonship, and we can pray with full meaning; "Our Father, who art in heaven." Paul emphasized this truth in Romans 8:14-17, which I urge you to read.

Think of it! We are privileged members of the royal family of God! There are no orphans in Heaven.

3. NEW FREEDOM - Along with our new life and family relationships, we are given a new freedom from sin. Always before sin had dominated us. We could do little about it in our own strength. But with the new birth, we have a new power over it in three aspects:

1. We are free from "Sin's Penalty", for Christ paid the price for all our sin in His death upon the cross (I Peter 2:24).

2. We are free from "Sin's Power", for "Sin shall nor have dominion over you" (Romans 6:14).

3. We will be saved from "Sin's Presence", for the Bible tells us that there will be no sin in Heaven (Revelation 21:27).

4. NEW FELLOWSHIP - When we are saved, we become members of the body of Christ, the Church. We read of those who were born again at Pentecost. "Then they that gladly received His word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). Yes, the new birth makes us one with that great company of the redeemed of all the ages. every genuine believer is a member of the church universal, the body of Christ.

5. NEW PRIVILEGE - We have the new privilege of prayer. We are open to talk with God, and He is pleased whenever we express our praise and bring our petitions to Him. "The prayer of the upright is His delight" (Revelation 15:8). The pattern for prayer (not to be repeated mechanically) is found in Matthew 6:9-13. Examples of men who prayed with power are: David (I Chronicles 29); Solomon (II Chronicles 6); Jehoshaphat (II Chronicles 20) and Daniel (Daniel 9)

Because we need grace everyday, are tempted everyday, and sin everyday, we need to pray everyday. Praying with other Christians at church is uplifting and beneficial, but your whole life as a Christian depends upon private prayer. Prayer brings power.

6. NEW OBLIGATION - As believers in Jesus Christ, we have the obligation to obey His commandments. This is how we fulfill the scriptural directive to be conformed to His image. Because we are bought with a price, we are to glorify God in our body and our spirit (I Corinthians 6:19-20). We are to present our bodies to Christ as a living sacrifice, not conforming ourselves to the world but experiencing transformation by a renewed mind. (Romans 12:1-2) We are not to give ourselves over to sin, but to yield ourselves to God and our "members as instruments of righteousness" (Romans 6:13). As we follow the commands and principles of Christ, we will experience spiritual growth and enjoy the rich blessings of a holy walk with God.

7. NEW RESPONSIBILITY - Finally, when we become Christians, we have the God appointed responsibility to carry the gospel message to the lost. "Go ye into all the world" Christ said, "and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). We ourselves would not have been saved if someone had not told us about our need and the death of Christ on our behalf. We too are commissioned to tell others, just as the shepherds "made known abroad" the good news that the Messiah had been born in Bethlehem, and that they had seen Him with their own eyes.

To summarize, when we experience, a whole new world opens to

us. "Old things are passed away, behold, all things become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). We have a new birth, a new life, a new family, a new freedom, a new fellowship, and a new responsibility. This adds up to the best life of all.

WHAT THINGS DO YOU SEE?

"Christ must be proclaimed and set forth, for unless He becomes visible, our gospel is veiled to those that are lost. But if our Gospel be hid, it is bid to them that are lost." II Cor. 4:3.

Satan, the god of this present age (world system), has blinded the minds of unbelievers to the light of the gospel. It is therefore essential that if this blindness is to be penetrated, Christ, not we ourselves, must be proclaimed. He is the divine source of light. We are the human source. The light must shine from God through us.

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal." II Cor. 4:18.

Look for God's thought in all the incidents, circumstances and objects of your daily life. Do not stop at the outward; penetrate to the inward and eternal. Beneath that bitter physical suffering, there are stores of divine fortitude and grace. Beneath that trying dispensation, there are celestial compensations. Beneath those sweet family ties, there are suggestions of love and friendship, which can never grow old or pass away. Beneath the letter of scripture is the spirit; beneath the ordinance, oneness with the loving Savior. Beneath the world of nature, the processes of the eternal husbandry.

When such is the attitude of the soul, afflictions that might otherwise have weighed as heavy, become light; and those that drag through long and tedious years, seem but for a moment. And without exception, they all go to exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

1980

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

There are some good books written on prayer. I think its something very important in a Christian's daily life. Here are some thoughts for you to consider.

"And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Luke 11:1

It was a wise and good request, prompted by the Savior's own practice. He did not, in the first instance, command his disciples to pray; but He gave Himself to the blessed practice of prayer, and this made them eager to learn and practice the holy art. This is the best way of inculcating new and holy habits on those who surround us. Do not begin by exhorting them; but by living before them a life so holy, so unselfish, so consecrated and devout, that they shall spontaneously approach you, saying, "Give us your secret; tell us how we may do and become as you." It is a holy life which constitutes our best pulpit.

We should daily ask the Master to teach us to pray. Each time we kneel in prayer we may well preface our petitions with the sentence: "we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but by the Holy Spirit, Lord, teach us to pray." And probably the Lord's answer will fall into suggestions, borrowed from the form and model of prayer which He gave his disciples. It has been called the Lord's Prayer; it should be called the Disciples.

Address prayer to the Father, through the Son. Do not be selfish in prayer; but look out on the needs of others, incorporating them in every petition; us, we, our. Remember, you are speaking to your Father, and that His honor and glory should have a paramount and foremost place. If you desire first the hallowing of His name, and the coming of His kingdom, all your personal needs and desires will fall easily and naturally into their place, which will be a comparatively subordinate one. You will need forgiveness as often and as regularly as your daily bread. Be also, direct and definite in prayer. Don't forget to pray.

1980

JESUS, WHAT A SAVIOR!

What does the name "Jesus" mean to you? I believe that there is no other name as important to God's children than the name of Jesus.

It is the name, "which is above every name." The Name at which "every knee should bow." Peter said, "there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." We also know Him as, The savior, The Son of God, The Son of Man, The Bread of Life, the Rose of Sharon, The Bright and Morning Star. Many beautiful names describe Him and his relationship to us. There is no other Name like His and there is no other person like Him.

His was a marvelous and supernatural birth. Joseph and Mary knew that their baby, their Jesus, was not just another little Jewish boy. The Wise Men came, guided by a Star. They knew He was the fulfillment of prophecy, the destination of the very Star itself. Jesus has always been different.

This baby was different from any other baby ever born. His life and everything he taught was different from the world.

This time of year, people are running and buying and selling and eating and partying just like the world. It is very hard to find Jesus. Tell me what shopping mall have you been in recently where you were struck with awe at the presence of Jesus Christ? Are God's people talking about Jesus? This is His birthday, and are they talking about what they are going to give Him?

We have been deceived by Satan and caught up in the world's view of Christmas. Christ should take first place in our Christmas list.

Do you know who Jesus is? Is He more to you than a babe born in Bethlehem, more than just someone about whom you are supposed to believe? Is He your life, your hope, your whole future? Or is He just someone to call on in moments of desperation?

Our whole hope of eternal life rests on Jesus and most people have lost Him in the gift wrap and advertisements. We have covered Him up with a custom.

Isn't it beautiful the way God sent Jesus? Born of a peasant woman in little Bethlehem; raised in an obscure village. He never wrote a book, but there are libraries filled with books about Him. He never practiced medicine but nobody has ever been healed without Him. He never traveled over 200 miles from home, but there is not a spot on the globe where He has not been and where He is not now. Herod couldn't kill Him, Satan couldn't seduce Him, death couldn't destroy Him and the grave couldn't keep Him. there is no one like JESUS.

Do you really know this Jesus? It is only right that we yield all that we are to Him. Let Jesus be the very care and center of your life.

AN INHERITANCE

"I'm a child of a King and one day I will inherit something wonderful. I claim it because God's word says so. "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." I Peter 1:4.

Yes, it is an inheritance. It is a free gift, and yet we have a right to it. We did not ask for it. We were born into its blessed privilege. The child that lies in yonder cradle, over which the coronet is emblazoned, may chain his broad ancestral estates simply by right of birth; and it is on that tenure that the saints hold heaven. By God's great mercy we have been begotten again!

Oh, blessed heritage! Incorruptible! The gnawing tooth of decay cannot injure it. Moth and rust cannot consume, or thieves break through and steal. No spendthright hand can scatter or overspend its pure robes; not a freckle on its leaves; not a taint of miasma on its atmosphere. Into the city entereth nothing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. That fadeth not away! Some of the fairest hopes that ever blessed human vision; the most delightful friendships; the most perfect dreams of delight, have faded and withered before our eyes. That never can.

It is kept for us, and we are kept for it. It is reserved in Heaven for you.

Who by the power of God are guarded through faith.

1980

LORD FULFILL MY HUNGER

"Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me." Proverbs 30:8.

God knows what you need for the maintenance of physical life and strength. The body is more than meat, and to have given you this is a pledge that He will give you that. The body is the vehicle and organ of the soul; and since God has given such a wonderful instrument into your custody, He is bound as need arises to furnish needful supplies. He could not expect that you should do what He has arranged should be done in your life without providing for the repair and maintenance of the wonderful machine through which alone your life plan can be realized. Trust in His faithfulness; He cannot deny Himself.

But there is other food which is needful - the daily bread of Love, Hope, Holy Thought, and Fellowship. There is other hunger than that of the body. But this will also be provided, according as each day requires. If the human fails, the divine will take its place, and God Himself will become the complement of your need. I was reading about the Chinese Christians where they would often put on the gravestones the words, "They shall hunger no more."

In God's grainaries, there is our share of corn already calculated for and provided. Let us ask for and claim it. We have no wish to have more than our share, or to despoil others. As Jesus said, Give us each day the day's supply - what ever the need be He will supply it

1980

BREAD OF LIFE
SATAN'S HELPERS

This will be directed to all Christians, God's family is all those who have been born of the Spirit or you may call it the second birth.

Do you remember that Jesus told Christians, you are the salt of the world and you are the light of the world.

What if you asked some Christian, how much have you helped Satan this week? Well, he may want to hit you or you may make him mad. You may ask yourself this question after you read this.

First let me say this, there is a battle going on within a Christian's life, the old fleshy nature with the new Spiritual nature. That's why we have to go to God daily for strength and forgiveness. Praise God! He is always present when we need Him.

I believe one of the biggest weaknesses of churches today is that there are too many members helping Satan's program. I will just call to your attention some of the things.

1. Your tongue - James 3:10 - "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessings and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be." Are you guilty? One of the awful daggers which Christians ever use is the tongue of slander. Churches have been wrecked, loved ones estranged, and lives ruined by it. Have you told any lies lately? Have you had any fussing and quarreling in your home life? Have you said unkind words about people? Do you gossip?

2. Each time you miss church you are helping Satan.

3. When you fail to study God's Word you are helping Satan.

4. When you fail to pray daily you are helping Satan.

5. When you fail to show love for your fellow man you are helping Satan.

6. When you fail to bear any spiritual fruit you are helping Satan.

7. If you fail to witness for Christ you are helping Satan.

These are some things for your consideration. I will close with this, may we heed Paul's words in II Cor. 13:5 - "Examine your selves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."

1976

A CAKE OF BARLEY BREAD

Please read all of Judges 7. We can get a very good lesson from how God dealt with Gideon. You will remember God told Gideon that he had too many soldiers in his original army of twenty two thousand. He had too many of the kind he had for the kind of battle he was out to fight. The church is in spiritual warfare and the weapons of the warfare are not carnal. The average run of the mill church member is untrained and unqualified for this kind of fighting.

Who ever heard of a cake of barley bread upsetting a tent. What a dream. To the dreamer and his comrade, there was no sense to it. But how much it meant to the two Hebrews who had crept up to the other side of the curtain, in the thick darkness were drinking in each work!

The dream was very humbling. It brought Gideon back to the simplicity and helplessness of his own resources. In the gathering of those crowds of warriors, in the notoriety he had achieved, in the loyalty of the three hundred, there was much to inflate his pride. Therefore, God bought him face to face with himself. He was only a cake of barley bread at the best.

Before God can uplift, use, and anoint us, He must show us what we are; humbling and emptying us, bringing us into the dust of death. Before God can use you to work a great deliverance, He must convince you of only being a cake of barley bread. "Five barley loaves and two small fishes."

It was full of hope, a cake of barley bread might be a worthless thing, but if God were behind it, it would upset a tent. So when the weakest life is placed at the disposal of the Almighty, and taken in hand by Him, it becomes mighty to the pulling down of strongholds.

It is full of teaching. How much has to be learned by us on these lines. We are too strong for God. We vaunt out might, we count our warriors, we magnify our generalship. This may not be! So God brings us down to the brook and tests us there; and reduces our force to three hundred men, and ourselves to barley cake, and there gets the victory with His right hand and His holy arm.

We need to rally a Gideon's band and infiltrate the world as the salt of the earth.

1981

LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE?

This question confronts each child of God. From the beginning of time, man was told to put God first above all things. This means anything that you love more than you do God and His Kingdom. For example, your family, worldly possessions, sports, entertainment, etc.

Some people worry more about eating and drinking and what they are going to wear than they do about doing the will of God. So, Jesus said in Matt. 6:33 - "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Jesus said, if we worry about these simple things that we have little faith.

The main theme of the whole Bible is LOVE. Let us consider the great commandment that Jesus preached, Mark 12:30-31 "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

If you are not saved, the natural thing for you to do is to love all the worldly things. God's word puts it very plain and if we as Christians will get these two commandments in order, then all the others will fall in line. To give you one example of putting pleasure first, when I was teaching school I had to work at the gate at the football games. Sometimes we would have rain and people would sit in the bleachers or stand on the sideline in the rain to see the game. If it rained on Sunday, a lot of the same folks would miss church because of the weather. Which do you thing they loved the most?

The answer of Jesus Christ to all of us in this chaotic world of strife and suffering, fear and doubt, desperation, dissatisfaction and discontent is simply clearly this one thing:

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self."

When a person has love, he has everything that is worthwhile; without love he is nothing, he has nothing. But love of God and of man must never be an empty sentiment. Love must be put into practice; it must be an inherent part of our lives. We must be concerned with other people.

I John 4:7-8 says "Let us love one another; for love is of God and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." In I John 3:18 we find "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Let us think about this scripture and see how we have failed. People will tell you or say I love you but never do any deed to prove it. When is the last time you did a good deed to show your love?

The prophet Micah sets forth a three fold pattern of conduct that is pleasing to God: Justice, Mercy, & Humility. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doeth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Micah 6:8. The Christian will find in this message the motivation for the good life, and a measure to follow in showing love for his neighbor.

The principles of morality do not change, nor do they vary with popular fancy. The Christian will do justice in conformity with God's revealed will; he will love and show mercy because God is loving and merciful; and he will walk humbly with his God for this is a mark of Christian discipleship. He is deeply aware that the way of humility is the way to spiritual greatness.

Is God first in your life?

July 1979

POOR BUT RICH

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which He had promised then that love Him?" James 2:5

There is nothing that men dread more than poverty. They will break every commandment in the Decalogue rather than be poor. But it is God's chosen lot. He had one opportunity only of living our life, and He chose to be born of parents too poor to present more than two doves at his presentation in the temple. All His life was spent among the poor. His chosen apostles and friends were, with few exceptions, poor. He lived on charity, rode in triumph on a borrowed steed, ate His last meal in a borrowed room, and lay in a borrowed grave. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world?" Why is poverty so dear to God?

1. It is in harmony with the Spirit of the Gospel. The world- spirit aggrandises itself with the abundance of its possessions. Its children vie with each other in luxury and display. The spirit of Christ on the other hand, chooses obscurity, lowliness, humility; and with these poverty is close akin.

2. It compels to simpler faith in God The rich man may trust Him; but the poor man must. There is so much temptation to the well-to-do classes to impose their wealth between themselves and the pressure of daily need; but the poor man has no fortress in which to hide, except the two strong arms of God. He waits on Him for his daily bread, and gathers the manna falling straight from the sky.

3. It gives more opportunities of service. The rich are waited on, and pay for servants to wait on those they love. The poor, on the

contrary, are called to minister to one another, at every meal, and all the daily round of life. Herein they become like Him who was, and is, as one that serveth, and who became poor, that through His poverty, we might be rich.

God loves everybody, but He must be first above all things in our life. If He hadn't loved the poor, I would have been left out.

1980

PLAN FOR READING AND STUDYING THE BIBLE

This is a plan for reading and studying the Bible for a three year period. I like it and I believe you will like it. I suggest that you take at least 15 minutes reading and 15 minutes studying the Bible each day and I mean every day. Daily Bible reading is to your spiritual life what daily eating is to your physical life. Read and study the Bible devotionally and prayerfully.

Three Year Bible Reading Schedule:

FIRST YEAR, READ...

1st John seven times

John twice

Mark twice

Galations through Philemon

Luke

Acts

Romans

The New Testament twice

SECOND YEAR, READ...

A Proverb every day for four months

Two other wisdom literature chapters daily. (Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

Read repeatedly for one month the following:

1st John

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1st Thessalonians

James

Romans 5-8

John 14-17

THIRD YEAR, READ...

One New Testament chapter daily

Two Old Testament chapters daily

Five Old Testament chapters on Sunday

MY CUP RUNNETH OVER

Do you enjoy your salvation? A person without salvation who is a member of the church is a person without a cup, so there is no container to run over.

A Christian's life is to be a joyful life. Phil. 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice." A person inside God's building without a cup, you see, can never enjoy a salva tion that's bubbling over with everlasting life, because he simply is without the significance of salvation.

John 16:24, "Ask, and ye shall receive that your joy may be full." We can all have this cup. But we can only have this cup when we come to the point where we receive and accept Christ in our heart by repenting of our sins, and having faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is not living a good life; it is not being emotional; it is not turning over a new leaf and trying to be better; salvation is not coming to church; salvation is not being baptized. Salvation is repenting of your sins and having to be lieve that Jesus Christ will forgive you of those sins and accept Him as your personal savior. A man in the church without salva tion can never have a cup filled because he has no cup at all.

Then there are those who have a cup but won't let God fill it. They turn their cup upside down. They are satisfied for every body else to carry on the work of the church. They are like a parasite and the result is they miss the joy of their salvation, and they wonder why they are not happy with their religion.

As Christians, we should want our cup filled each day and espe cially when we are in church service. God will fill it if we want it filled. Psalm 16:11, "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Romans 14:17, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy ghost. Gal. 5:22, "the fruit of the spirit is joy."

Can you accept God's portion of service? We are saved for a purpose. If you can't accept, there will be no happiness in your life. But if so you will be happy and your cup will be filled and run over.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I wish that I could talk to each one of you personally, but due to my physical condition I can't. I'm paralyzed on my left side from a stroke and I have Parkinson's disease.

My question is this. If you were suddenly called out of this world where would you spend eternity? There are only two places to go and they are Heaven or Hell. If you are saved, been born again, you will go to Heaven. If you are lost you will go to Hell. God gives us a choice. If you or any of your family are lost and would like for me to pray for you, please let me know. I wish I could truthfully say that every one in my whole community was saved. Don't put it off too long.

Concerned for lost souls,
Glenn E. Sones

P.S. Remember, God loves you and so do I.